



*I. Shurt Sculpt.*



**EZEKIEL HOPKINS**  
**EPISCOPUS DERENSIS.**

*Printed for Nathanael Ranew*



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THE  
First Volume  
OF  
DISCOURSES  
OR  
SERMONS  
ON SEVERAL  
SCRIPTURES.

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By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS*,  
late L. Bishop of *London-Derry*.

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*The Second Edition Corrected.*

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*Yard*, 1694.



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THE  
PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.

*Christian Reader,*

**A**Lthough the following *Sermons* need no *Epistle* to commend them to any intelligent *Reader*; yet Custom having made it necessary to say something, for the Satisfaction of the World, concerning the *Posthumous Works* of deceased Persons, I shall therefore speak a few Words briefly.

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## *The Preface*

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The Reverend *Prelate*,  
the Author of them, was a  
Person of great natural Parts,  
and Excellent Learning, as  
well as of great Piety and  
Charity: One that adorned  
the *Church of England*,  
whereof he was an Eminent  
*Pillar*, ruling well in  
the Church of God, & therefore  
deserved *double Honour*,  
as the *Apostle* speaks: And  
doubtless, his Reward is now  
great in Heaven, with his  
Lord and Master, whose Service  
here on Earth was accounted  
by him as his highest Honour,  
and that which he professed  
himself most ambitious of. He

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*to the Reader.*

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He was a Person of great Modesty and Humility; having very mean and low Thoughts of himself, and his own Abilities; which was the Reason why the World had so little Knowledge of him from the *Press*, having published nothing

\* but what he was constrained to, either by the restless Importunity of *Friends*, or the Commands of those that some Time were his *Superiors*.

\* See his  
*Vanity of the  
World, and  
A Funeral  
Sermon, &c.  
Octavo.*

But the Intendment of this *Epistle* being not to give the World an Account of the Life of this Excel-

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## *The Preface*

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lent Person, whose Praise is deservedly in the *Church of God*; I forbear to add any thing farther concerning him, hoping it will shortly be done by a more worthy Pen.

And as for the following *Sermons*, the excellent Style in which they are written, and the exact Accuracy with which they are penn'd, may give abundant Satisfaction unto All, in the Reading of them, that they are His *Lordship's* own, and were fairly written with his own Hand, and copied out  
from

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*to the Reader.*

---

from thence, ſince his *Death*, by one of his *nearest Relations*, and ſo tranſmitted unto the Preſs.

The Subject Matter of them being agreeable to the Divine Inspirations of the *Holy Scriptures*, will ſpeak better for themſelves, than the Words of any other can. And that they may be very uſeful and profitable unto thoſe that heard them, and unto all that ſhall read them, is the hearty and ſincere Prayer of the *Puſliſher.* *Farewell.*

Books

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**B O O K S** Printed for  
Nath. Ranew, at the King's  
Arms, in St. Paul's Church-  
Yard.

**T**HE *Vanity of the World*: With other  
Sermons, in Octavo.

*An Exposition on the Ten Commandments* :  
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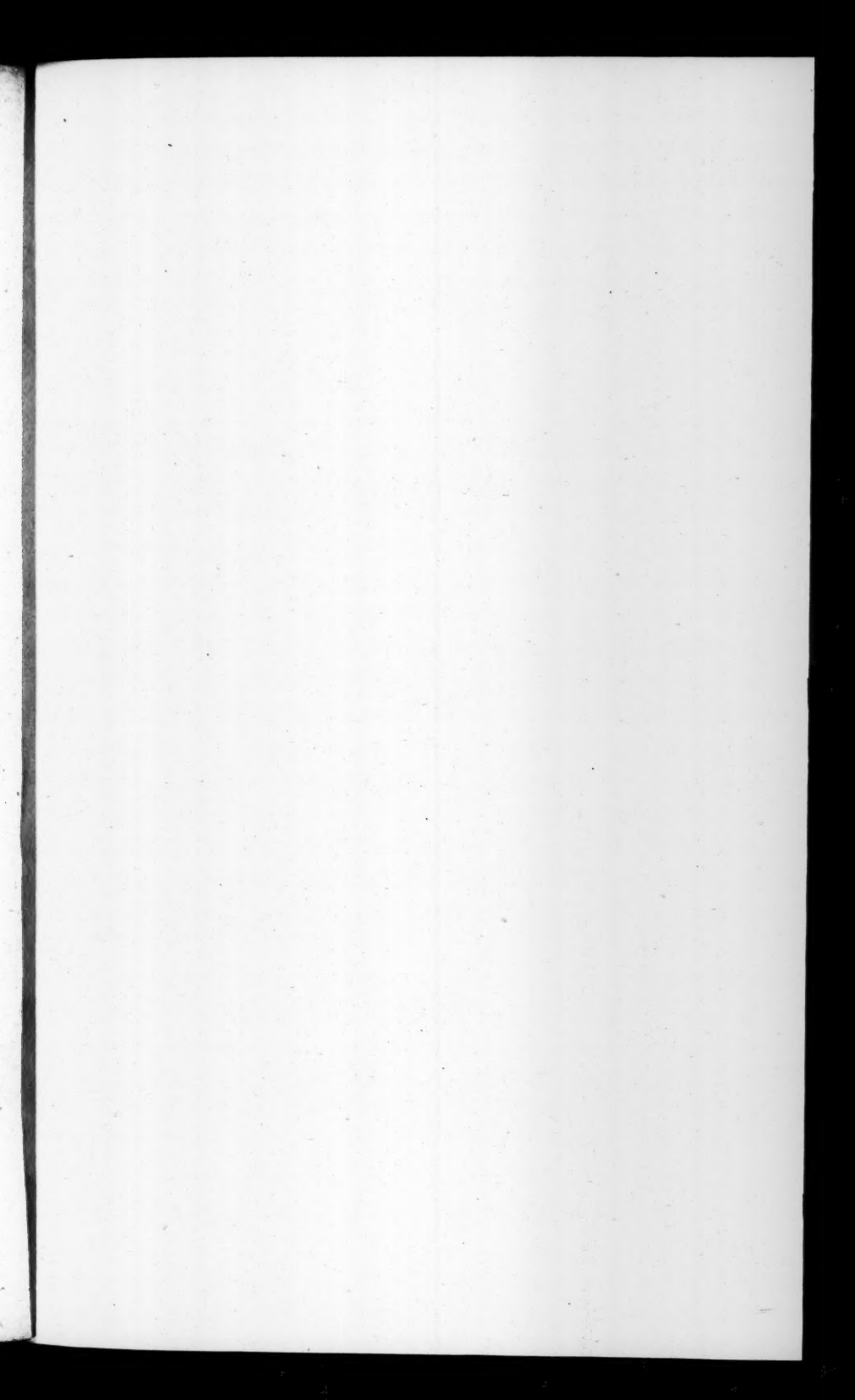
*An Exposition on the Lord's Prayer*; with  
a catechistical Explication thereof, for the  
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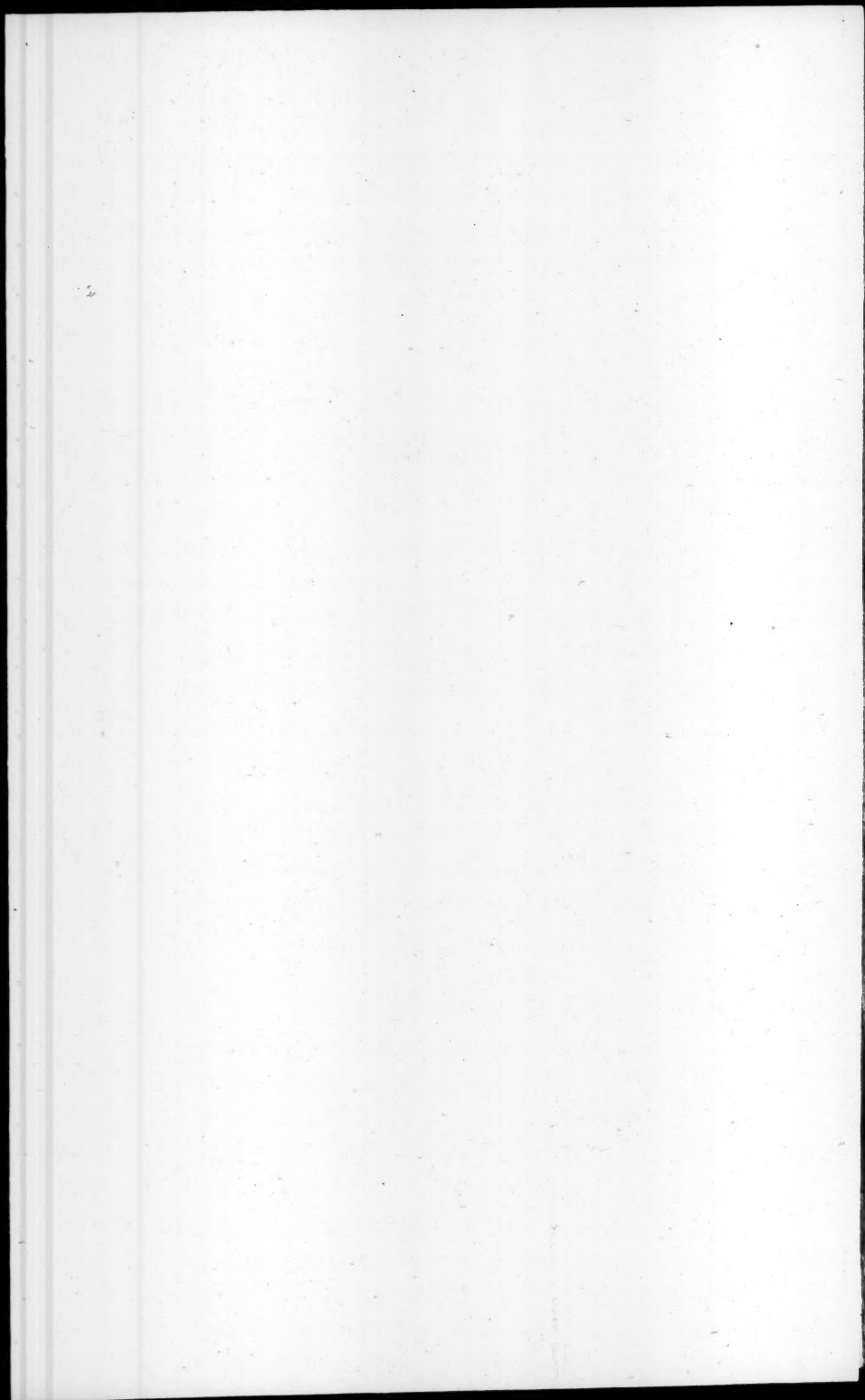
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mons, on several Scriptures*, now in the  
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Octavo.

*All Six written by Ezekiel Hop-  
kins, late Lord Bishop of Lon-  
don-Derry; and sold by Nath.  
Ranew, at the King's Arms,  
in St. Paul's Church-Yard.*





THE  
FOLLY  
OF  
Sinners, &c.

PROV. xiv. 9.

*Fools make a Mock at Sin.*

WE are not generally to expect any connexion, either of Sense or Sentences in this Book of the *Proverbs*. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich *Mine*, where the precious *Ore* runs along in one continued *Vein*: But this is like a Heap of

B

*Pearls;*

*Pearls* ; which, though they are loose and unstrung, are not therefore the less excellent or valuable.

The *Text* I have now read, is one of them, an entire Proposition in it self, without relation to, or dependance upon any Context.

*The Division  
of the Words.*

In it, we have these things considerable.

I. *First*, The Character or Periphrasis of wicked and ungodly Men ; and they are said to be such as *make a Mock at Sin*.

II. *Secondly*, Here is the Censure past upon them by the All-wise God, and the wisest of Men ; they are *Fools* for so doing ; *Fools make a Mock at Sin*.

The Words are plain and obvious ; only the Phrase of making a *Mock*, may seem subject to some ambiguity, and various  
accept-

acceptations ; and indeed the *Scripture* useth it in divers Senses. Sometimes it signifies an abusing of others, by violent and lewd Actions : So we read that the *Hebrew Servant*, says *Potiphar's* Gen. 39. 17. *Wife, came in unto me to mock me.*

Sometimes it signifies an exposing of Men to Shame and Dishonour : So the wise Man tells us, *Wine is a mocker.* Sometimes Prov. 20. 1.

it signifies an imposing upon the Credulity of others, things that seem incredible and impossible : So we read in *Genesis*, when *Lot* had declared to his Sons-in-Law the Destruction of *Sodom*, it is said, *He seemed unto them as one* Gen. 19. 14.

*that mocked.* Sometimes it is taken for a failing in our Promises, and thereby defeating, and frustrating the Expectations of others : And thus *Herod* is said to be *mocked by the wise Men*, in Matth. 2. 16.

*Matth. 2. 16.* But none of these are at all congruous to our present purpose, nor applicable to the Words of the *Text*.

*What's meant  
by Mocking.*

There are therefore Two other acceptations of this Expression, frequently occurring in the *Holy Scriptures*.

I.

*First*, This Word *Mock* is commonly taken for scoffing, or bitter taunting at others. Thus our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered the Flouts and Derisions of an insolent Rabble, who *set him at nought, and mocked him*, as *St. Luke* speaks : Thus those blessed *Martyrs* and *Confessors*, that followed his steps, are said to have endured *the trial of cruel Mockings*, as the *Apostle* tells us. And indeed this is the difference between a wise Reprover, and a bitter Mocker ; that the Words of the one are like  
*Balm,*

*Luk. 23. 11.*

*Heb. 11. 36.*

*Balm*, both soft and sanative ; but the Words of the other are like *sharp Swords*, which cut deep into the Minds of Men, and commonly make them rankle into Hatred and Malice. And doubtless there are very many Spirits can sooner put up an Injury done them, than a cutting bitter scoff ; because nothing expresseth so much Contempt, nor shews how despicable we account them, as a fleering Gibe.

*Secondly*, Mocking may be taken for slighting, and making no account of, looking upon things or Persons, as trivial and inconsiderable. And thus it is used in *Job*, where the *Horse* is said to *mock at fear*, when he rusheth into the Battel, and is not terrified ; but rather enraged by all the Horrors of War, *When the Quiver rattleth against him, the*

II.

Job 41. 29.

*glittering Spear and the Shield. And so it is said of the Leviathan, He laugheth at the shaking of the Spear, for he esteemeth Iron as Straw, and Brass as rotten Wood.*

Now in either of these Two Senses may the Words of the Text be taken; when they tell us, they are *Fools that make a Mock at Sin.*

*A Twofold  
Consideration  
of Sin.*

For Sin may be considered, either as committed by others, or as committed by our selves; and it is egregious *Folly* to make a *Mock* of either, so as to sport at the one, or to slight the other.

I. *First*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at other Men's Sins, so as to turn them into a Matter of Jest and Raillery.

II. *Secondly*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at their own Sins, so as to think the Commission of them a slight and inconsiderable thing.

I shall

I shall very briefly speak of the *First*, and so pass on unto the *Second* Particular.

*First* therefore, They are I.  
*Fools* that make a *Mock* at other *They are Fools  
that make a  
Mock at other  
Men's Sins.*  
 Men's Sins, so as to make them  
 a matter of Mirth and Pastime.

This indeed is Sport for *Devils*,  
 all whose Recreation, and Hel-  
 lish Solace, is the Sin and Wick-  
 edness of Men. The Damna-  
 tion of Souls is the Sport of  
 Hell: And Thou who canst re-  
 joyce in their Joy, deservest like-  
 wise to howl under their Woes  
 and Torments. We justly con-  
 demn it, as a most barbarous  
 and inhumane Custom amongst  
 the ancient *Romans*, who brought  
 many selected Pairs of miserable  
 Men into their publick *Theatres*,  
 only to delight the Spectators  
 with their Blood and Death.  
 But this was an innocent Recrea-

tion in comparison of thine, who takest pleasure to see thy poor Brother wounding and stabbing, yea damning his precious Soul. Go laugh at a wretched Man upon the *Rack*, or upon the *Wheel*; Laugh at the odd distorted Postures of *Epilepticks*, or the Convulse Motions of *Dying and Expiring Men*; Sport thy self with their writh'd Looks, and antick Shapes of Misery: This is far more civil, more humane, more pious, than to make those Sins thy Mirth, which will be thy Brother's Eternal Woe and Anguish. What thinkest thou? Could'st thou look into Hell, that place of Torment? Could'st thou see there all the Engines of God's Justice, and the Devil's Cruelty, set on work in the eternal Torture of those, who perhaps once made as light of their  
own

own Sins, as thou dost of other Men's ; wouldst thou think this a pleasant Spectacle ? Wouldst thou sport and divert thy self to see how they wallow in Fire and Brimstone, or how they circle and twist themselves in unquenchable Flames ? Certainly such a Sight as this would affect thee with a cold Horrour, and a shivering Dread : And how then canst thou sport thy self to see thy Brother damning himself, since it would fright thee to see him damned ? Believe it, Sirs ; The Sins that now abound in the World challenge our Tears and Pity : We ought to mourn and repent for those who do not, who will not repent for themselves. It is a sad, and a doleful Sight to see so many every where dishonour God, disgrace their Natures, and  
destroy

destroy their Souls ; to see some come reeling home, disguis'd in all the brutish Shapes that Drunkenness can put upon them, ready to discharge their Vomit in the Face of every one they meet: Others frantick with Wrath and Rage, and; like a Company of Mad Men, flinging about *Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death*: To see such woeful Transformations, and the dire Effects that Sin and Wickedness have caused in the World ; certainly he that can entertain himself with Mirth at these things, hath not only forsworn his *Religion*, but his *Humanity* ; and may, with much more Reason, make the Miseries of poor distracted People, chain'd up in *Bedlam*, to become his Sport and Pastime.

I know it will be here pretended, that surely it can be no such

such great Crime to explode and hiss Sin off the *Stage* ; nay, it were a proper Means to keep Men from being generally so wicked , could we but make Wickedness more ridiculous in them.

But, alas ! *Vice* is now-a-days grown too impudent to be laughed out of Countenance ; and those Methods of a scurrilous Mockery, which some plead for, as rendring *Vice* ridiculous, have, I doubt, only made it the more taking and spreading, and encouraged others to be the more openly sinfull, by teaching them to be the more wittily vile and wicked. Few will be deterred from sinning, when they think they shall but gratifie others, by making Sport for them ; and stir up, not their Indignation and Abhorrence, but their Mirth and Laughter.

Laughter. 'Tis true, we read that *Elijah* mock'd the Idolatrous Worshippers of *Baal*, and his Scoffs and Taunts at them were very biting and *sarcastical*, and cut them much deeper than they are said to cut themselves : But this he did in a serious and zealous reproving of their Sins, not in a jocular and sportive Merriment. There are two things in Sin, Impiety and Folly ; we may lawfully enough scorn the one, while we are sure to hate and detest the other : And a due Mixture of both these together, Scorn and Detestation, are very fit to enkindle our Zeal for God, and may oftentimes be a requisite Temper for him who is to reprove confident and audacious Sinners. But to laugh and sport at others Wickedness, and to make the Guilt and Shame of others

thers our Mirth and Recreation, is both unchristian; and inhumane; and we may as well laugh at their Damnation, as at that which will lead them to it. Thus to make a Mock at Sin, is to make our very Mocks to be our Sins; and argues us, not only profane, but foolish; for this is to laugh and rejoyce at our own Stain and Dishonour, and to abuse our own Nature, that Nature which is common to us, as well as others; that Nature which, were it not debased with Sin, renders us but a little lower than the *Angels*.

What a fair and glorious Creature was Man, before Sin debased and sullied him! A Friend to his God, Lord of the Creation, made a little lower than the *Angels*, being a-kin to them, though of a younger House, and  
meaner

meaner Extract, adorn'd with all both natural and divine Perfections, till Sin despoil'd him of his Excellency, and made him who was almost *equal to the Angels*, worse than the very *Brutes* that perish, sottish and miserable. And canst thou laugh and sport thy self at that which hath ruin'd and undone thee, as well as others? Thy Nature is blemish'd and corrupted as much as theirs. When we look abroad in the World, and observe the abominable Wickednesses that are every where committed, the Murthers, Uncleanesses, Blasphemies, Drunkenness, and all those Prodigies of Impiety that every where swarm amongst Men; how by *Lying, Stealing, Swearing, and Committing Adultery, they break out, until Blood toucheth Blood.* What else see we now

Hof. 4. 2.

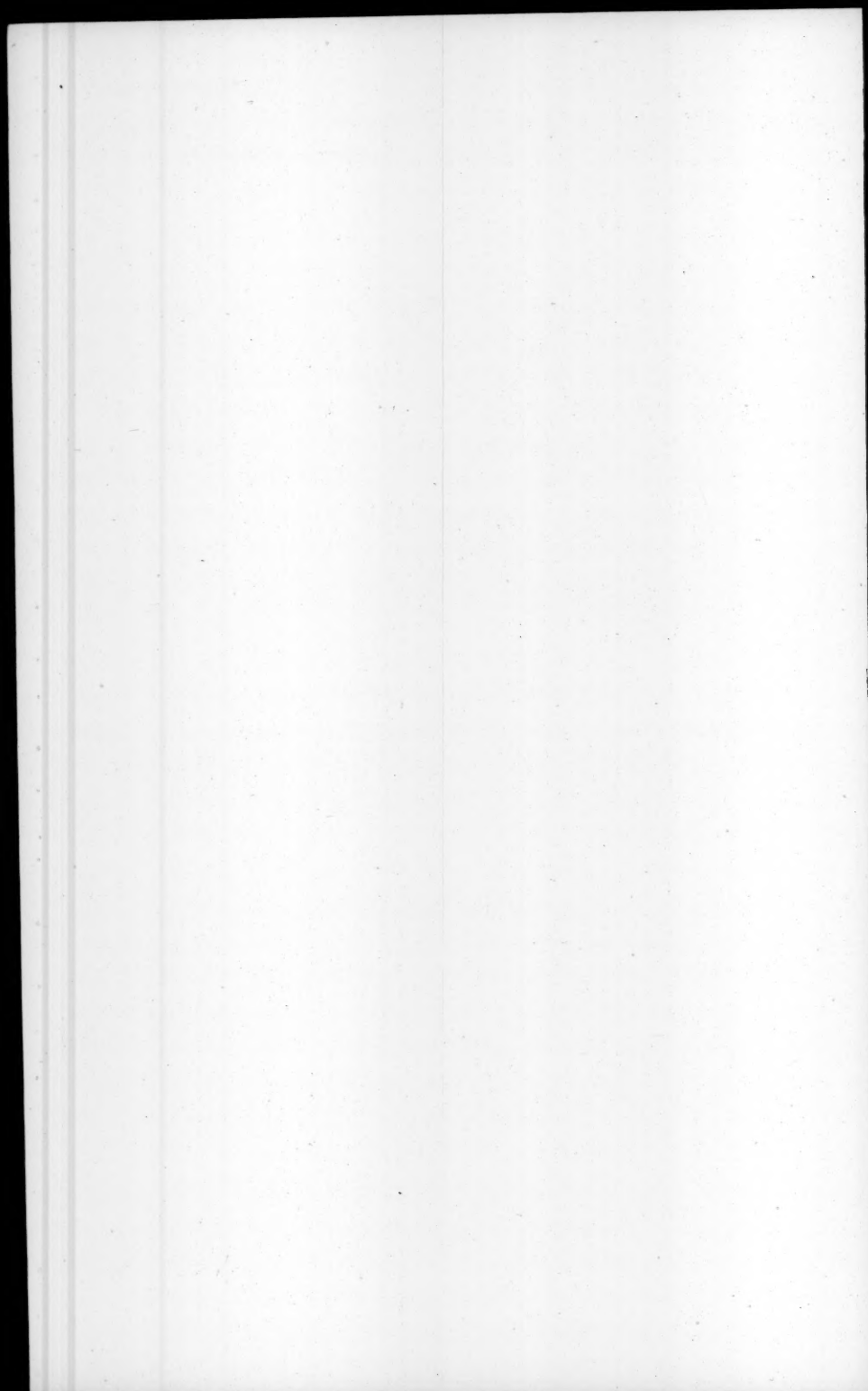
in all this, but the woful Effects of our own corrupt Nature : Here we see our selves unbowed, and discover what we our selves are, at the price of other Men's Sins ; *For as in Water, Face* Prov. 27. 19 *answereth unto Face , so doth the Heart of Man to Man.* We have therefore more reason to lament the Sins and Miscarriages of others, than to make a Sport and Mock at their Wickedness, since we our selves are the very same, and prone enough, without the Restraining Grace of God, either to imitate, or exceed them.

Hence then, *First*, Consider *I. Use.* what an accursed, horrid thing Shews the Evil of tempting others to sin. it is to tempt others to sin, only that thou mayest afterwards make Sport with them, and raise a Scene of Mirth out of the Ruins of their Souls. I wish this were not as common a Practice, as it is

Habak. 2. 15,  
16.

is damnable: See what dreadful Woes God denounceth against such, by the Prophet: *Woe unto him that giveth his Neighbour Drink; that puttest thy Bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look upon his Nakedness; his Shame and Dishonour. Thou art filled with Shame, for Glory: Drink thou also, and let thy Fore-skin be uncovered; the Cup of the Lord's Right Hand shall be turned unto thee, and shamefull Spewing shall be on thy Glory.* Hence have these Devils (for that Name belongs to them who do his VVork) invented all those Artifices of Excess and Drunkenness, to draw on others to debauch themselves, and their Reason, that they may have Matter to laugh at their sottish Actions, and to boast how many they have made to fall under the Puissance





fance of their Riots. But certainly, if there be an *Hell*, as it is certain there is; or if that *Hell* were not made in vain, as it was not; these wretched Sinners can expect nothing else, but to have their Portion therein with those *Devils*, whose industrious Factors they have been: And there the Cup of God's Right Hand, a Cup of pure VVrath, and unmix'd Fury, shall be given them, and they be forced to drink it off, to the very Dregs and Bottom of it, spewing out Fire and Brimstone eternally.

*Secondly*, Hence think how *II. Use.*  
desperately impious, wicked *Shews the Wickedness of those that sin, only to tempt others to sin.*  
VVretches they are, who sin only to make others Sport; that buffoon themselves into *Hell*, and purchase the Pleasing others with the dreadful Damnation of their own Souls: And yet, How  
C frequent

frequent is this in the World? How many are there, that will neither spare *God*, nor *Heaven*, nor *Scripture*, nor *Religion*, nor common Modesty, if they come but in the way of a Jest? Nothing, how sacred, how venerable soever it be, can escape them, if they can but turn it into Drollery.

I need not mention what *Tropes* and *Metaphors* Men have found out to talk lasciviously by; almost every one is perfect in that piece of Rhetorick: Nor what strange, monstrous Lies some will aver openly, to raise either Mirth or Wonder in Company. And that which is worst of all is, that now the *Holy Bible* is become a mere Jest-Book with them, a Common-Place for Wit, and merry Discourse; and the Devil again speaks Scri-

pture out of these Men's Mouths ; they know no more of it, than what they abuse ; and all their Meditations and Comments upon it, are only how such and such Passages may be ingeniously perverted , and turned into Burlesque , to heighten the Mirth of the next profane Company they meet. Impious Wretches, that dare to violate the most tremendous Mysteries of Religion, and expose their God to Scorn, his Oracles to Contempt, and their own Souls to Eternal Perdition ; only for a little Grinning and Sneering of a Company of vain, yea, mad *Fools*, who think they commence Wits by applauding Blasphemy ! But these VVits, as they are profane and impious , so they prove themselves very Fools , thus to sport themselves to death : Their

Laughter is rather spasmodical and convulsive, than joyous; a *Risus Sardonicus*, caused by Venom and Poyson: They go down merrily to Hell, and frolick themselves into Perdition.

And thus I have done with the *first* sort of *Fools*, namely, those that make a Sport and Mock at other Men's Sins.

## II.

*They are Fools  
that make a  
Mock at their  
own Sins.*

The *Second* Particular is to shew, that they are *Fools* who make a Mock at their own Sins, so as to think the Commission of them but a slight, inconsiderable Matter. And here I shall shew you,

## I.

*First*, That wicked Men do generally account Sin a small, slight Matter.

## II.

*Secondly*, What it is that induceth and persuades them to account so slight of it.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, Their gross and inexcusable *Folly* for so accounting of it. III.

*First*, That wicked Men do I.  
generally account Sin a small,  
inconsiderable Matter, may appear from these three Things.

I. Slight Provocations and I.  
easie Temptations are sufficient *Slight Temptations make some Men sin.*  
to make them rush boldly into  
the Commission of Sin: Any  
slight inconsiderable Gain, and  
transitory, fading, washy Pleasure;  
yea oftentimes, a meer Gallantry  
and Humour of Sinning, is enough  
to make them venture upon any Crime,  
that the Devil, or their own wicked  
Hearts shall suggest to them:  
Yea those very Things, for which  
they would scarce suffer a Hair  
of their Heads to be twitch'd off,  
are yet forcible enough, to  
persuade them to lie or swear,

Sins that murder and destroy their precious Souls for ever ! VVhat is this but a plain Demonstration, that they account Sin a mere Trifle, and look upon it as a small and slight thing to offend the most high God.

2.

*Hard to work  
Sinners to a  
True Sorrow  
for Sin.*

II. It is very hard and difficult to work these Men to any true Sorrow and Compunction for their Sins : Turn the Mouth of all the terrible Threatnings that God hath denounced in his Holy VVord against them, and let them thunder out all the VVoices and Curses that are in the Magazine of God's Justice against them, yet these wicked VVretches are not startled at it ; but still hold fast their Confidence and Boldness, when they have lost their Innocency and Integrity, and cannot, nor will not be persuaded that God should

should be so angry and incensed for such small matters.

III. If they are at all moved with these things, yet they think that a slight and formal *Repentance* will suffice to make amends for all: They pacifie their Consciences, and think they appease God also, by crying him Mercy; and find it as easie a matter to repent of their Sins, as it is to commit them. And therefore certainly these Men must needs have very slight Thoughts of Sin, who can be so easily tempted to commit it, and are so hard to be brought to repent of it; or if they do, yet is it so slightly and superficially, as if they feared the Amends would be greater than the Injury.

3.

I come now to the *Second* II.  
Thing, and that is, to shew Causes of Sinners making light of Sin.  
what it is that induceth and per-

C 4

suadeth

suadeth wicked Men to make so light of their Sins.

Now there are these Two things that make Sinners to account their Sins slight and trivial Matters.

I.

*Sinners not being exemplarily punished, causes them to make light of Sin.*

I. Because they see so few Instances of God's dread Wrath and Vengeance executed on Sinners in this Life; and those rare Ones that are extant and visible, they impute rather to Chance, than to the Retribution of Divine Justice: And therefore, upon their own Impunity, and the Impunity of others, they conclude, That certainly Sin is no such heinous thing as some sower, tetrical People would fain persuade the World to believe: And so they cry *Peace, Peace, to themselves, though they go on in the Forwardness of their Hearts, adding Iniquity to Sin.* Because God so long winks

Deut. 29. 19.

winks at them, they conclude him blind, or at least, that he doth not much disallow those Sins which he doth not presently punish. Indeed, it would be somewhat difficult to *answer* this *Argument*, were this present Life the appointed Time of Recompence. No, but God reserveth his Wrath and Vengeance to a more publick, and more dreadful Execution of it, than any can be in this Life. Though now thou feelest no Effects of God's Wrath, yet, believe it, the Storm is but all this while gathering: But when thou launchest forth into the boundless Ocean of Eternity, then, and perhaps never before then, will it break upon thee in a Tempest of Fury, and drown thy Soul in Perdition and Destruction.

2.

*Sinners make  
light of Sin,  
because it is  
no real Injury  
to God.*

II. Another thing that makes wicked Men think so slight of Sin, is that it cannot affect God with any real Injury ; for as he is not benefited by our Services, so he is not wronged by our Iniquities: 'Tis true, could our Sins reach God, could they dethrone him, or rend off any of his glorious Attributes from his immutable Essence, there might then be great Reason why God should so severely revenge them, and we for ever detest and abhor them : But since his Glory is free from any Stain, and his Being from any Wrong and Prejudice, our Sins are nothing to him, nor is there any Reason we should judge them heinous and provoking.

'Tis true, *O Sinner*, thy Sins can never invade God's Essence ; that is infinitely above the Attempts

tempts of Men or Devils, but yet everywicked Wretch would, if he could, dethrone God : Sinners would not have him be so holy, nor so just as he is ; not so holy in hating of their Sins, nor so just in punishing of them ; that is, they would not have him to be God ; for it is necessary that God should be as he is. Sinners do really contradict God's Purity, rebel against his Sovereignty, violate his Commands, defie his Justice, provoke his Mercy, despise his Threatnings, and hinder the Manifestations of his Glory to the World : And is all this nothing ? Every Sinner hath so much Poyson and Venom in him, that he would even spit it in the Face of God himself, if he could reach him : But because God is in himself secure  
from

from their impotent Assaults, Sin shews its Spight against him in what it can; defaceth his Image where-ever it comes, abolisheth all Structures and Lineaments of God in the Soul, and would banish his Name, his Fear, his Worship from off the Face of the whole Earth: And therefore thou who art guilty of this Rebellion against the great Majesty of Heaven, canst thou yet think thy Sins to be slight and inconsiderable, and not worth either the Cognizance, or the Vengeance of the Almighty? Believe it, the Day is coming, and will not tarry, when that Guilt which thou now carriest so peaceably in thy Bosom, and which, like a frozen and benumb'd *Serpent*, stirs not, nor stings not, shall, when heated with the Flames of Hell, fly in thy

thy Face, and appear in all its native and genuine Deformities and Horror, and overwhelm thy Soul with Everlasting Anguish and Torment; and then, but too late, then wilt thou exclaim against thy self, as being worse than a *Fool*, or Mad-man, for thinking so slightly of, and making a *Mock* at that which hath eternally ruin'd and destroyed thee.

And having thus shew'd you briefly, that wicked Men do make light of Sin, and the Inducements that tempt them to it. I shall now, in the

*Third* place, shew you their *III.*  
great and inexcusable *Folly* in so

doing. And certainly never was *The Folly of Sinners in making light of Sin, appears in that they*

any insensate Man, never any that was wholly abandon'd by his Reason and Understanding, guilty of a greater *Folly* than this is: For,

I. Is

**I.** *Hope to repent of it.* **I.** Is it not most egregious *Folly* and Madnes for any to do that, which yet they hope they shall live to repent that ever they did it? This is such a *Folly*, as all the Extravagances of *Fools* could never match; and yet this most wicked Men are guilty of: They boldly rush into Sin, only upon this presumptuous Confidence, that they may hereafter be sorry that now they did it. In which their *Folly* is doubly notorious, in that

**1.** **1.** They venture upon a certain Guilt, in hope of an uncertain Repentance. And,

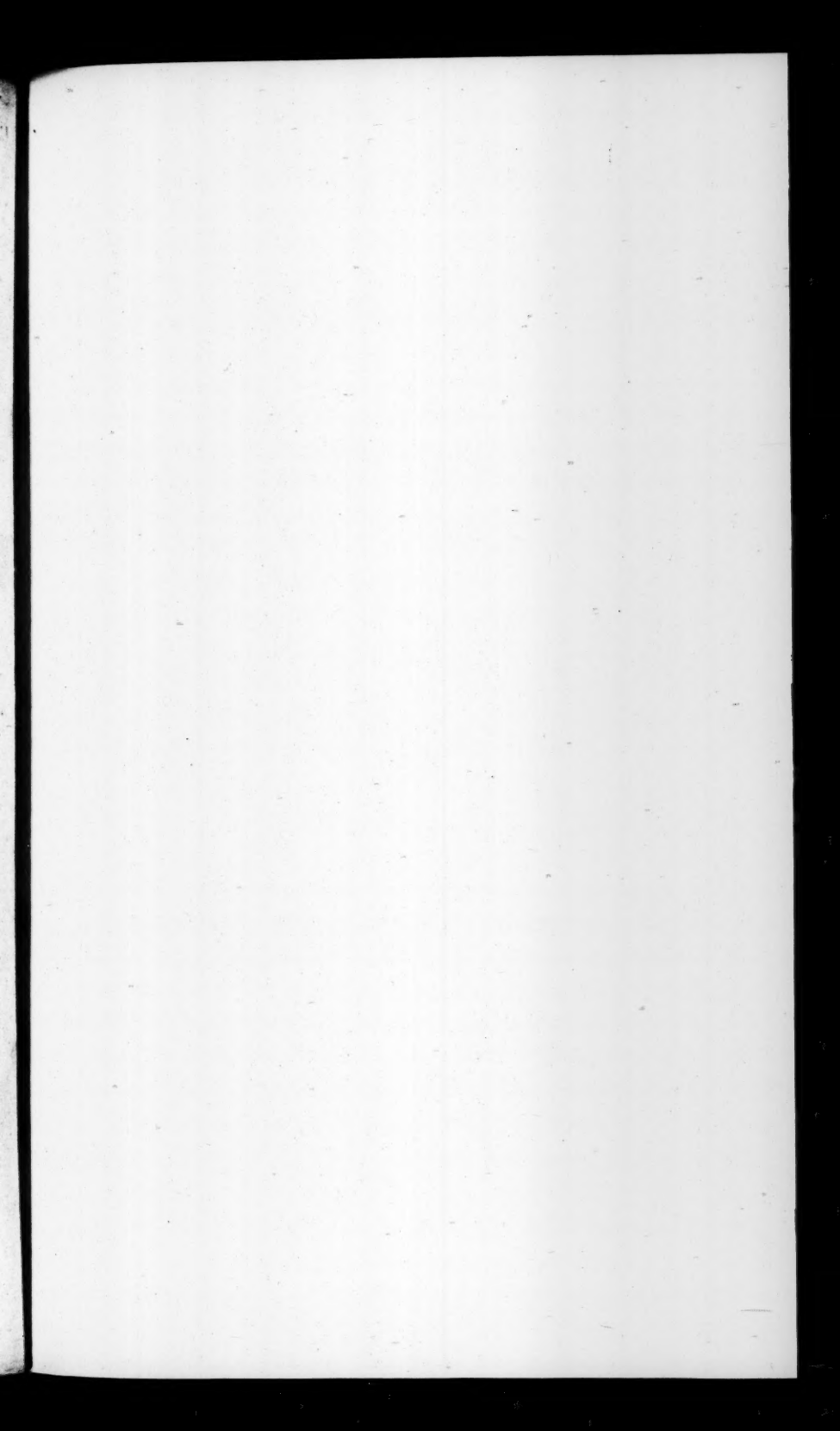
**2.** **2.** In that they take up their unprofitable Sins upon so great and burthensome an Interest.

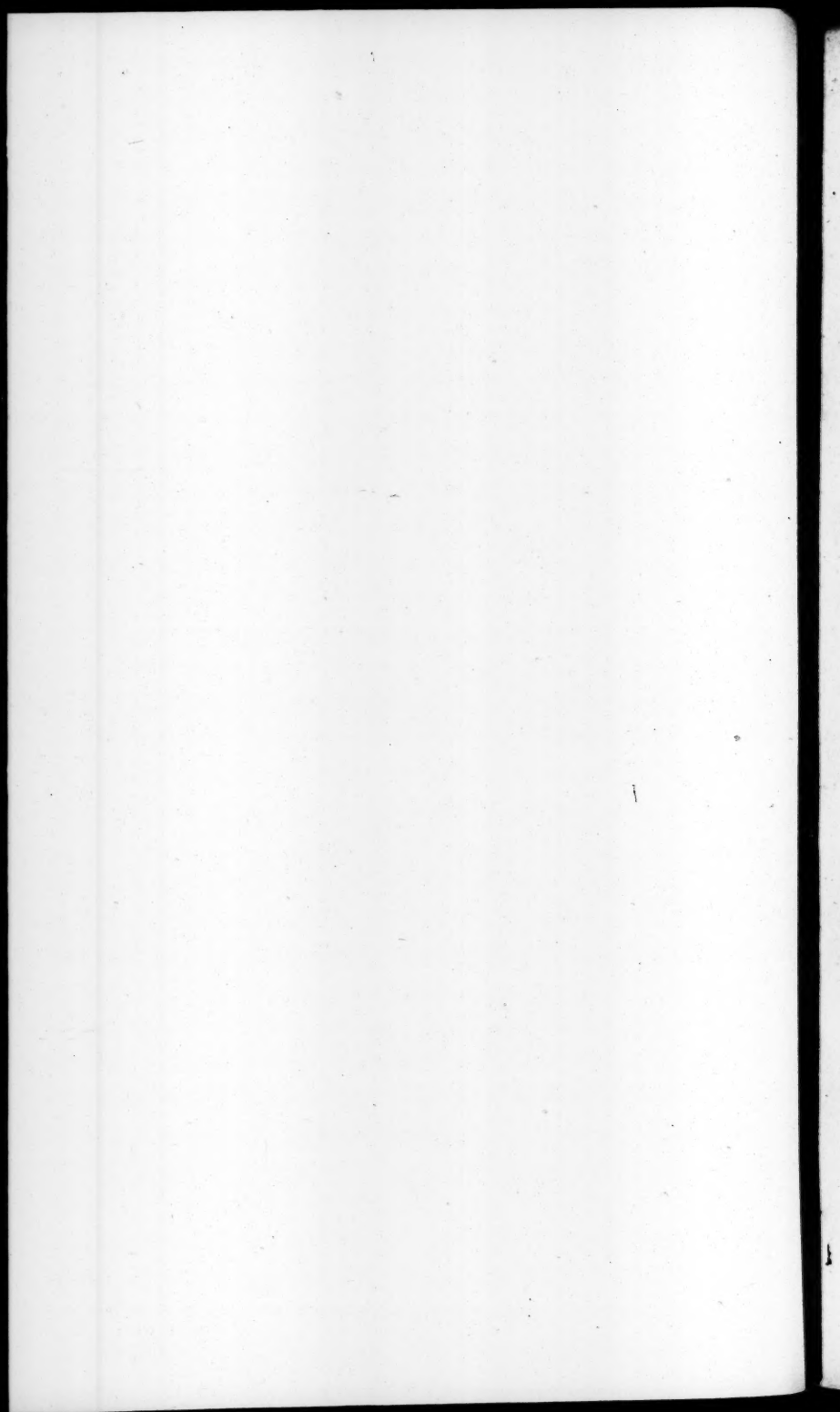
**I.** **1.** In that they venture upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance. For either God may cut thee off, O Sinner,

*Sinners Folly great, in venturing upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance.*

Sinner, in the very Act of that Sin which thou intendest to *repent* of hereafter: Or, if he afford thee Time for *Repentance*, he may withhold his Grace, and in his just and righteous, but yet fearful Judgment, seal thee up under Hardness and Impenitency, that thou shalt go on, *treasuring up to thy self Wrath against the Day of Wrath.* And if either of these, through the righteous Judgment of God, should happen unto thee, what a deplorable *Fool* wilt thou prove thy self to be, that sinnest out of Hopes of Repentance, and of a Repentance which perhaps will never be granted? Alas? How many hath God, in his signal Vengeance, cut off, by some remarkable stroke, with an *Oath*, or *Curse*, or *Blasphemy* in their Mouths, scarce fully pronounced?

ced? How many, with their drunken Vomits gogling in their very Throats: How many, while their Souls have been burning with their lustful Embraces, have even then been cast into Hell, and burnt up with Everlasting Fire? Or, if Vengeance should spare thee for a while, O Sinner, yet thou knowest not how soon it will strike thee: It is great Folly to expect the Warning of a sick Bed; *Death* often surprizes by sudden Casualties, or by some Diseases as sudden as Casualties; and there are many Ways of *Dying*, besides *Consumptions*, *Agues*, and *Dropsies*, the lingring Fore-runners of an approaching Dissolution. But if God should cast thee down upon a sick Bed, he may justly visit thee, who hast neglected thy Soul in thy Health, with such  
Distem-





Distempers as may make thee not only unfit, but such as may render thee incapable of doing thy last kind Office for it. It is Folly to expect the Admonition of Old Age: Alas! the *Almond-Tree* doth not every where flourish; and it is not one, to many Thousands, that lay down an *Hoary Head* in the Bed of the Grave. But grant thou couldst be assured of the Continuance of thy Life, yet is it not egregious Folly to sin in hope of repenting, when every Act of Sin will make thy Repentance the more difficult, if not impossible? The older thou growest, still the more desperate is thy Case; for thy Sins will be the more rooted and habituated in thee, and thy Heart the more hardned to resist the Grace of God: So that, upon all Accounts, thy Repentance is  
D. most

most uncertain ; and the longer thou continuest in Sin, still the more unlikely and improbable. And then judge, thou thy self, whether it be not extream Mad-ness and Folly, to make so light, or no Account of Sinning, be-cause thou makest account of Repenting. But

2.

*Sinners great  
Folly to pur-  
chase the Plea-  
sures of Sin  
with a bitter  
Repentance.*

2. Suppose it were most in-  
fallibly certain that thou shalt  
repent, yet none but *Fools* will  
take up the Pleasures of Sin upon  
the Sorrow, Anguish, and Bit-  
terness of a true and hearty Re-  
pentance. Dost thou seriously  
consider what *Repentance* is ? It  
is not a transitory Wish, a warm  
Sigh, or a languishing *Lord have  
Mercy*, in a Distress, or on a sick  
Bed ; (and yet even these can-  
not be without judging and con-  
demning themselves for *Fools*,  
when they sinned :) No, but  
*Repent*

*Repentance* is the breaking of the Heart, a rending of the very Soul in pieces: The usual Preparatives to it are ghastly Fears and Terrours, sharp and dreadful Convictions, that will even search thy very Bowels, break thy Bones, and burn up thy very Marrow within thee. More especially doth God deal thus terribly with veterane, old, confirmed Sinners, making *Repentance* more bitter to them, than to others, that they may see and confess themselves *Fools*, in indulging themselves in their Sins, in hopes of repenting for them. Say then; when the *Devil* and thine own Lusts tempt thee to any Sin; say, If I commit this Sin, either I shall repent of it, or I shall not; if I never repent of it, as it is a hazard whether I shall or no, what is there

in Sin, that can recompence the everlasting Pain of Damnation? If I shall repent, what is there in the Sin, that can recompence the Anguish and Bitterness of *Repentance*? This is such an unanswerable *Dilemma*, that all the Craft and Subtilty of Hell can never solve. And if we would but always keep this fixed in our Minds, it were impossible that ever we should make flight of Sin. While thou thus arguest, thou arguest solidly and wisely; but to say I will sin, because perhaps I may repent, is quite below the meanest Capacity that ever own'd the least Glimpse of Sense and Reason.

2.

*Sin will make  
Sinners a publick  
Scorn to  
the whole  
World.*

II. Is it not *Folly* to make a *Mock* at that which will be sure to pay thee home, and to make a publick *Mock* and Scorn of thee to the whole *World*? How many

many have their Sins and Vices made infamous among Men? They are a Shame, and a Reproach to all that are but of a civil and sober Converse; and as much lost to Reputation, as they are to Vertue? But however, certainly all wicked and ungodly Men shall be made a publick Scorn and Derision to all the World, both God, Angels, and Men: God will *mock* at them, he tells them so expressly, for so the Wise Man speaks; *Because you have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof; I also will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as a Desolation, and your Destruction cometh like a Whirlwind.* All their Sins and Deeds of Wickedness shall then be exposed to the open View and

PROV. I. 25, 26.

Contempt of *Saints* and *Angels*, who shall subscribe to the righteous Doom of their Condemnation. *Devils* will then upbraid their *Folly*, and triumph that they have outwitted them into the same most miserable and deplorable State with themselves. Think now, *O Sinner!* How wilt thou be able to hold up thy guilty Head, and thy amazed and confounded Face? Whither, Oh whither canst thou cause thy Shame to go, when Men and Angels shall point and hiss at thee, and thy *Folly* shall be proclaimed as loud as the last Trumpet, which Heaven and Earth, and all the World shall hear?

3.

*The Folly of  
Sinners to  
damn their  
Souls for Sin.*

III. Is it not the Foolishness of *Folly* it self, to make light of that which will for ever damn thee? Art thou such an *Idiot*, as  
to

to account *Hell* a Trifle, and *Damnation* it self a slight Matter? What is it then that makes thee think Sin so small and trifling a thing? For *Hell*, and *Death*, and Eternal Wrath are certainly entail'd upon it. Consider what a most cutting Reflexion it will be to thee in *Hell*, when thou shalt for ever cry out upon, and curse thy self for a wretched *Fool*, that ever thou shouldst make slight of those Sins which would damn thee. What was there in them, for which thou hast forfeited Heaven, and Everlasting Happiness, but only a little impure brutish Pleasure? And now that it is past and gone, what remains of them, but only the bitter Remembrances? Certainly thou wilt ten thousand times, and for ever call thy self an accursed *Fool* for so doing, when it is too

late to help it. Be persuaded therefore now to be wise betimes for your Souls ; else you also will, when there is no Redress, curse your own *Folly*, that hath brought upon you all those Extremities of Woe and Anguish.

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*FINIS.*

# True Happiness, &c.

REV. xxii. 14.

*Blessed are they that do his  
Commandments, that they  
may have Right to the  
Tree of Life, and may  
enter through the Gates  
into the City.*

**T**Hese Words which I have  
now read, consist of these  
Two Parts:

*First, A Proposition. And,  
Secondly, A Proof of this  
Proposition.*

*First, A Proposition, in these* Division of the Words.  
*Words, that They that do God's  
Commandments, are blessed.*

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Here is the Proof of this Proposition, in these Words, that *They have a Right to the Tree of Life, and shall enter through the Gates into the City.*

It is the Connection of both these together, that I intend chiefly to speak unto. Only give me leave, as a Preliminary to the ensuing Discourse, to shew you what is contained in the first and great Word in my *Text*; and that is, the Word *Blessed*.

There is therefore, a Twofold *Beatitude*, or *Blessedness*: The One is *perfect* and *consummate*; the Other *initial* and *incomplete*. The former is the Completion of all Good perfective of our Natures, and our entire and satisfying Enjoyment of it. This Blessedness now is only attainable in Heaven; for God alone is the Centre of all Good, and all the Good  
that

that is desirable in this World ,  
are but so many Lines drawn  
from the Centre, to the utmost  
Circumference of the Creation.  
There is nothing that can supply  
the Wants, perform the Hopes,  
fulfil the Desires, without Con-  
finement circumscribe, without  
cloying satisfy the most enlarg-  
ed Capacities of a Rational Soul,  
but only that God who is infi-  
nitely, universally, and indefe-  
ctively good ; and therefore he  
alone is our objective Happiness:  
and our formal Happiness is our  
Relation to, and Union with  
this All-comprehensive and In-  
comprehensible Good. Our Af-  
similation to him, and Partici-  
pation from him , of all those  
Perfections which our Natures  
are capable of enjoying, but our  
Understandings not now capable  
of knowing. But this *consummate*  
*Blessedness,*

*Blessedness*, is reserved for our unknown Reward hereafter, and is not that which my *Text* here speaks of.

There is therefore an *imperfect* and *initial Blessedness*, which consists in a Preparation for, and a Tendency unto the other : As those are said to be accursed, whose Sins and Vices prepare them for Eternal Perdition ; so those likewise are said to be blessed, whose Grace and Holiness prepare them for Eternal Bliss and Happiness.

Now such as these are blessed in a Fourfold Respect.

*Such as do  
God's Com-  
mandments,  
are blessed in  
Four Respects.*

I.

*In the Seed.*

*Psal. 97. 11.*

*First*, They are blessed, in *Seed*, in the Seed : *They go forth bearing precious Seed*, and shall doubtless rejoyce in a plentiful Harvest : So the *Psalmist* tells us, *Psal. 97. 11. Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright*

*right in Heart.* And though they often appear Clods of Earth ploughed up, harrowed, and broken with Affliction; yet is there that blessed Seed cast into them, that will certainly sprout up to Immortality, and Eternal Life, as all the Beauties of a Flower lie couched in a small unsightly Seed: And so truly Grace is Glory in the Seed; and Glory is but Grace full blown.

Secondly, They are blessed in II.  
*primitiis*, in the First-Fruits. They *In the First-Fruits.*  
have already received some part of their Eternal Felicity, in the Graces and Consolations of the Holy Ghost; which are therefore called *the First-Fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 23. by the Apostle, Rom. 8. 23. and *the Earnest of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 1. 22. 2 Cor. 1. 22. and *the Earnest of our Inheritance*, Ephes. 1. 14. Ephes. 1. 14. Now, as the Earnest is always part of the Bargain,

Ephes. 1. 3.

gain, and the First-Fruits are always of the same kind with the whole Harvest, so is it here; the Graces and Comforts of the *Holy Ghost*, are the very same now, that they shall be in Heaven it self: And therefore the *Apostle* bleisseth God, who hath blessed us with spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ. Better indeed they shall be in Heaven, but not other. Here our Graces often languish under the Load and Pressure of Corruption, but in Heaven they shall be for ever vigorous and triumphant: Here our Waters of Comfort often fail us, our Cistern is often dried up, and our Bottle spent; but in Heaven we shall for ever lie at the Fountain of Living Waters, and take in Divine Communications, as they immediately flow from the Divine Essence, without having them

them deadned or flatted in the Conveyance. But yet, both by these imperfect Graces and Comforts, we do truly and properly enjoy God; the Enjoyment of whom in any measure is **Happiness**, but in the highest measure is **Heaven** it self. If therefore the Mass and Lump be Blessedness, the First-Fruits must be blessed also.

*Thirdly*, They are blessed in **III.**  
*Spe*, in Hope; whence it is called by the Apostle, *That blessed Hope.* Blessed in Hope. Titus 2. 13. A blessed Hope it is, because that which we hope for is *Eternal Blessedness*. The Hope of worldly Things is commonly more tormenting, than the Enjoyment of them can be satisfying. It is an Hope that vitiates and deflowers its Object, and so mightily Over-rates them in the Fancy, that when they come to pass, our Hope is rather frustrated

ted than accomplished : And were it not for that Impatience, which is the constant Attendant of this Hope, it would be a Problem hard to be resolved, whether Expectation or Fruition were the more eligible Estate. Vain therefore and wretched must needs be the Hopes of those things, which cannot answer what is expected from them; like a Golden Dream to a Beggar, or the Dream of a furnish'd Table to one that is hunger-starv'd. But now the Hopes of Heaven can never impoverish the Glories of it, for they are infinite and inexhaustible; and God hath laid up for his, that which the Heart of Man cannot conceive.

*Two Properties  
of a Christian's  
Hope.*

A Christian's Hope hath Two Prerogatives above any worldly Hope.

One

One is, That it may attain to a full and final Assurance, as the *Apostle* speaks to the *Hebrews*; where he calls it, *The full Assu-* Heb. 6. 11.  
*rance of Hope unto the End.* An Hope it is, because the Object of it is a future Good desired and expected. But yet it is an Hope that is joined with a full Assurance of the Event; an Hope that may flower up into such a Certainty, as to have no Mixture of Fear or Doubting in its Composition; but may be as sure of the Heavenly Inheritance, as if our Reversion were already in actual Possession: Whereas Worldly Hope can never be secure, but some Providence or other may interpose, to disappoint it.

The other *Prerogative* of a Christian's Hope, is, that though it be thus fully assured, yet the

E

Accom-

Accomplishment of it shall always have the sweet Relish of Surprize and Wonder ; for the Happiness will be far greater than the Hope , and the Inheritance larger than the Expectation ; whereas Earthly Hopes, if they grow to any degree of Confidence of Success, upon Frustration they turn into Impatience and Rage : Or if perhaps they do succeed , the Sweetness of the Accomplishment was long before suck'd out and devoured by our greedy Expectation ; the *Game* is torn and eaten , before the *Huntf-man* can come in. And upon both these Accounts, the pious and obedient Christian is blessed in Hope : It is a blessed Hope that shall certainly be accomplished ; and a blessed Hope, the accomplishing of which shall infinitely exceed our Expectations,

tions, and fill us, not with Shame, but Eternal Admiration and Wonder.

*Fourthly*, They are blessed in *Right* and *Title*: And upon this very Account especially my *Text* pronounceth those blessed that do God's Commandments, because they have a Right to the *Tree of Life*, and to enter in through the Gates into the City. IV.   
 Blessed in   
 Right.

Now these Expressions, according to the Genius and Style of this whole Book, are mystical and allusive; and for the explaining of them I must shew,

*First*, What the *Tree of Life* is. I.

*Secondly*, What is this City, into which they have a Right to enter. II.

*Thirdly*, What it is to enter through the Gates into the City. III.

*Fourthly*, What Right it is which Obedience to God's Com-

mandments gives us to the Tree of Life, and to enter into the City.

I.

*What the Tree  
of Life is.*

For the First of these, *What this Tree of Life is?*

Rev. 22. 2.

*I answer, We find Mention made of this Tree of Life in Two other places of this dark Prophecy; the one is in Ver. 2. of this Chapter: On either Side of the River was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of Fruits, and yielded her Fruit every Month; and the Leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the Nations. But this, very probably, may be only an Enigmatical Representation of the Doctrine of the Gospel; let us then consult the other place, where Mention is made of this Tree of Life, and that is in Rev. 2. 7. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, that is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Now this carries a plain Allusion to that*

Descrip

*This place.*

17

4

Rev. 2. 7.

Description of the Earthly Paradise of which we read, *Gen. 2. 9.* where it is said, *God planted the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden.* Now this *Tree of Life* was so called, not that it had any natural Vertue to perpetuate Man's Life to Immortality, but only from its *typical* and *sacramental* Use; God having appointed the Eating thereof as a Sign and Pledge of our Immortality, had we continued in our Innocency and Obedience. And therefore we find, that upon the Fall, God set a Guard upon this Tree, and as it were excommunicates sinful *Adam* from partaking of this *Sacrament* of the *Covenant of Works*, which was both a Sign and Seal of Immortality; signifying thereby, that Sinners have no Right to Eternal Life, according to the Terms of the

first Covenant : But this Right being again restored to us by Jesus Christ, therefore they are pronounced blessed *that do God's Commandments*, because *they have a Right to the Tree of Life* ; that is, to that Eternal Life and Immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel, and to which the *Tree of Life* in Paradise was a Sacrament and Emblem.

## II.

*What is meant  
by City.*

Rev. 21. 10, 14.

Rev. 22. 15.

*Secondly*, Let us enquire what is *this City*, into which those that *do God's Commandments shall enter* ? and we have a most large and glorious Description made of it in Chap. 21. of this Book, from Ver. 10. to the end of the Chapter. and, in brief, it is nothing else but *Heaven ; the New Jerusalem, that holy City, the City of the Living God*, into which *no unclean thing shall enter*. For without are *Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whore-mongers,*  
and

and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth  
and maketh a Lye.

Thirdly, What is it to enter III.  
through the Gates into this City? *What it is to  
enter through  
the Gates into  
the City.*

*I answer, Though in the foregoing Chapter this City is described to have twelve Gates, and in them the Names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, to signifie to us, that through the Grace of the Gospel, there is a Passage and an Inlet into Heaven for all those that are true Israelites; yet, in true propriety of Speech, there is but one Way, and but one Gate to Heaven: Yea, and our Saviour tells us, that Way is narrow, and that Gate is strait; for so we find his Words; Strait is the* Matth. 7. 14.  
*Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. The Commandments of God are this Gate to the Heavenly City, and the two*

*2. c. must understand & keep*

Tables of the Law are the two Leaves of this Gate, through which every one must pass, that hopes to be admitted into the New Jerusalem. And although David seems to make this Gate very large, when he tells us, **Psal. 119. 96.** *Thy Commandments are exceeding broad*; yet that is only to be understood concerning the Authority of its Injunctions, not of the Liberty of its Indulgence. It is exceeding broad in the Extent of its preceptive Power, for it prescribes Rules to all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, and to every Circumstance of each; but it is exceeding narrow and strait in the Scope and Allowance that it gives us; that as soon may a Camel go through the Eye of a Needle, as we pass through this Gate with the Burthen of one unmortified Lust, or one unrepented Sin. But

But why is it said *That those* Quest.  
*that do God's Commandments may*  
*enter through the Gates into the City?*  
 Can any enter in as a Thief, or  
 a Robber, over the Wall? Or  
 can any, as an Enemy, scale  
 those Eternal Ramparts, and  
 take it by Invasion?

*I answer:* This is so expressed, Anfw.  
 to denote the free Access and  
 Admission of those into Heaven,  
 who are careful to obey the  
 Commandments of God upon  
 Earth: Such as these are free-  
 born Citizens of Heaven; their  
 whole Estate, their whole Traf-  
 fick, all their Treasure and Live-  
 lihood is laid up there; they are  
 free *Denizens* by the Charter of  
 the New Covenant, they may  
 challenge Ingress as their Right  
 and Due; and he who hath the  
 Keys of David, *who openeth and no* Rev. 3. 7.  
*Man shutteth, and shutteth and no*  
*Man*

*Man openeth,* opens the Door to these, and lets them into those Eternal Mansions, which he hath purchased and prepared for them.

## IV.

*What Right  
Obedience  
giveth to the  
Tree of Life,  
and to the  
Heavenly City.*

The *Fourth* and last Query to be enquired into, is concerning that Right which Obedience to God's Commands gives us unto this *Tree of Life*, and to this *Heavenly City*; that is, to Eternal Life and Glory. Now here I shall branch out this Query into Two; and so I shall shew you,

## I.

I. What that *Obedience* is, which gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

## 2.

II. What that *Right* is, that this *Obedience* doth confirm.

*What that O-  
bedience is  
that is menti-  
oned in the  
Text.*

I. What that *Obedience* is, which gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

## I.

*Not Legal Obe-  
dience.*

*I answer:* It is not a Legal *Obedience*, or a perfect personal Righteousness, that now gives us this *Right* to Heaven; this is  
very

very plain, because to constitute this, it is necessary that there be both Original Purity in our Natures, which since the Fall is miserably vitiated and corrupted; and also a Sinless Perfection in our Lives, in the constant Observation of every *Iota* of the Law, both as to its Extention, and Intention; that we obey it in every part and tittle of it, and that our Obedience unto every part be raised to the highest degree of Love, Zeal, and Charity. This *Title* was once good, but it is now lost, by the Fall, in the common Ruine and Rubbish of Mankind; and he who hath not another *Title*, upon better and easier Terms, will find *Cherubims*, and the Flaming Sword of Divine Justice, set to guard the *Tree of Life* from his Approaches; as once they did from guilty *Adam*. II. There

2.  
*It is Evangelical Obedience.*

II. There is therefore another *Obedience* which gives a *Right* unto the *Tree of Life* ; and that is an *Evangelical Obedience* ; which, according to the *Grace*, *Condescension* , and *Equity* of the *Gospel* , shall be accepted unto, and rewarded with *Everlasting Happiness*. Now this *Evangelical Obedience* consists not indeed in *Innocency* and *Perfection*, but in sincere *Desires*, and proportionable *Endeavours* after it ; when we strive to the utmost to live holily, and to walk more strictly with God, according to the *Rules* that he hath prescribed us in his holy *Word* ; And it consists of *Two Parts* ; *Mortification* of our corrupt and sinful *Affections* , whereby we die daily unto *Sin* : And the *Spiritual Renovation*, and *Quickning* of our *Graces*, whereby we increase

crease daily in spiritual Strength, and make farther Progresses in Holiness and true Piety. And as it consists of these Two Parts, so hath it also these two Adjuncts.

1. The one is, True Repentance for our past Sins, reflecting upon them with Shame and Hatred, confessing and bewailing them with Sorrow and Contrition, and endeavouring, with all Earnestness and Sincerity, to abstain from the Commission of the like for the future.

2. The other is, A True and Lively Faith, whereby we rely on the Blood and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of our Sins ; and upon his perfect Righteousness, and prevalent Intercession for the Acceptation and Reward of our imperfect Obedience.

Who

Whosoever doth thus sincerely do the Commandments of God; universally and constantly, with his whole Strength and Mind, as though he expected to be saved by the Merits of his own Works; and yet, after all, doth so entirely rely on the Merits of Jesus Christ for Salvation, as though he had never done any thing: He it is, and he alone, who hath this *Right unto the Tree of Life*, and shall enter through the Gates into the Heavenly City. For he doth his Commandments out of a sincere Love; and God, who is Love, will own his Sincerity.

## II.

*What Right  
Obedience  
gives to Eter-  
nal Life.*

*Secondly*, I come now to consider what that *Right* is, which this Evangelical Obedience, or doing the Commands of the Law, according to the Favour and Mercy of the Gospel, doth confer upon us, by virtue of which

which we may assuredly expect Eternal Life. And here,

I. It cannot be a *Right of Purchase, or Merit*. It is a foolish Presumption, and intollerable Arrogance, to think we can deserve any thing at the hands of God, unless it be his Wrath by our Sins. For,

I.  
*Not a Right of Purchase.*

I. In all proper Merit there must be an Equivalence, or at least a proportion of Worth between the Work, and the Reward: Which to imagine between our Obedience, and the Heavenly Glory, is to exalt the one infinitely too high, and to abase the other infinitely too low. What proportion is there between a *Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple of Christ*, and that Ocean of Everlasting Joy and Pleasure, which shall be the Reward of it? A Man might more reasonably

I.  
*In Merit there must be an Equivalence.*

Job 22. 3.

sonably expect to buy *Stars* with *Counters*, or to purchase a *Kingdom* with *Two Mites*, than think to purchase the *Heavenly Kingdom* by paying down his *Duties*, and good *Works*, which are no way profitable unto God, (*For is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous ; or is it any Gain unto him, that thou makest thy Way perfect ?*) and bear no more proportion to the infinite *Glory of Heaven*, than a single *Cypher* doth to the numberless *Sands* of the *Sea*.

2.

*Grace to obey is given freely.*

2. The very *Grace* that enables us to do the *Commandments of God*, is freely bestowed upon us by himself ; and therefore the *Obedience* we perform unto him, merely by his own *Assistance*, cannot be said (without a grand *Impropriety*) to merit any *Reward* from him. Such  
kind

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kind of Merit is but an idle and frivolous pretence : For certainly, he who gives me Money to buy an Estate of him, doth as freely give me that Estate, as if I had never bought it of him, but he had immediately bestowed the Land upon me, and not the Summ of Money.

3. All our *Obedience* is imperfect, and therefore, if it deserve any thing, it is only Punishment for the Defects and Failures of it. This Coin is not currant, this Metal is base and adulterated, the King's Stamp defaced and obliterated, the Edges clip'd, and the Superscription, which should be on both sides *Holiness to the Lord*, is on the Reverse at least, *A Sacrifice to Hypocrisie, Formality, and Vain-Glory*; and therefore this counterfeit and base Alloy will not pass for Purchase-Money; and had it what it deserves,

serves, it would be melted down in the Furnace of Hell.

4.  
Obedience  
is due  
from us.

4. Suppose it were perfect, which it is not, yet is it no more than our bounden Duty; and Duty can never be meritorious. We are bound by the Law of Nature, and, as we are Creatures who have received our Beings, and the Continuance and Preservation of them from God, to employ our selves faithfully and assiduouſly in his Service; and if, for our greater Encouragement therein, he hath promised, and will bestow upon us a vast and unconceivable Reward, we must attribute it wholly to the Supererogation of his free Bounty; for without this, all our Services were due to him before. Thus our Saviour

Luk. 17.  
9, 10.

tells us, *Doth the Master thank the Servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye; when you shall have done all*

*all those things that are commanded you, say, (not in a complemental way, but with Truth and Sincerity) we are unprofitable Servants, we have but done that which was our Duty to do: And therefore certainly, if we cannot deserve Thanks, much less can we deserve so ample a Reward as Eternal Life: And therefore those that think to purchase Heaven and Eternal Life by doing that which is not commanded, nor their Duty, will find a fearful Disappointment of their presumptuous Hopes, when they shall hear that sad Greeting, Who bath required these things at your hands?*

This *Right* then of Merit and Purchase is excluded, and no Man can have a *Right* to Heaven upon the Account of the Worth and Value of his Works.

*A threefold  
Right to  
Heaven.*

There is therefore a *Thre<sup>2</sup>fold Right* which they that do the *Commandments of God*, have to Heaven, and Eternal Happiness.

1. 1. *They have a Right of Evidence.*
2. 2. *They have a Right of Inheritance.*
3. 3. *They have a Right of Promise.*
1. 1. *Obedience to God's Com-*

*A Right of  
Evidence.*

*mandments* gives us a *Right of Evidence* to Eternal Life. He is judged to have the best Right to an Estate, who can produce the best Evidence for it. Now the best *Evidence* that can be shewn for Heaven, is our unfeigned *Obedience* : All other things that Men may rely upon to justify their Title, will prove but forged Deeds, to which only the Spirit of Presumption or Enthusiasm hath set his Seal, and not the Spirit of God; and therefore we find how miserably the Confidence of those Wretches were dismounted, and their Hopes frustrated, who came with

with Lord, Lord, Have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? All this may be, and yet be no good Title, no good Evidence for Heaven; for if those who cast out Devils, have not cast out their Lusts; if those who prophesie in his Name, by their Sins dishonour and blaspheme that Name; if those who are Workers of Miracles, are yet Workers of Iniquity, he professeth against them, that *he knows them not*; and commands them to depart from him for ever, as Workers of Iniquity; whereas on the contrary, we find a joyful and blessed Sentence pronounced upon others, according to the Evidence brought in for them by their good Works; so our Lord himself tells us, *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you: for I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat;*

Matth. 7.  
22.Matth. 7.  
22, 23.Matth. 25.  
30.

for I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; sick and in Prison, and ye visited me. This Particle [*For*] is not a Note of Causality or Merit, but only of Evidence; for as *Evidences* prove our *Right* to our Possessions, so likewise our *Obedience* and good Works do effectually prove the *Right* which we have to Eternal Life, through Christ's Purchase, and God's free Donation; and therefore the Evidence being clear, the *Sentence* must in Equity proceed accordingly. God, as a just and righteous Judge, instates them in the Possession of the Kingdom of Heaven, because they *visited*, and *relieved*, and *cherished* his Son in his Members: Not that their Love to him, or their Charity to them purchased any such *Right*; but only proves and evinceth it: It is not the Cause of their Justification, but  
a Rea-

a Reason why God declares them justified ; as the Deeds which I produce are the Reason why an Estate is adjudged mine, though the Cause of my *Title* to it be either my own Purchase, or another's Gift. As therefore those are said to have no *Right* nor *Title* to what they pretend, who can shew no Evidence for it ; so those who *obey* not the holy Will and Commands of God, have no *Right* to the *Tree of Life*, because they have no Evidence to shew, nor no Plea to urge for it, but will certainly be cast in their Suit.

2. Those that do God's Com- 2.  
mandments have a *Right of Heir-* *A Right of*  
*ship, and Inheritance* unto *Eternal Life*; *Heirship.*  
for they are born of God, and there-  
fore Heaven is their Patrimony,  
their Paternal Estate; for so are  
the Words of the Apostle, *Every* <sup>1 Joh 1. 29.</sup>  
*one that doth Righteousness, is born of*  
F 4 God :

God: And if they are born of God, then, according to the Apostle's  
 Rom. 8. 17. *Argumentation, If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs with Christ, who is the Heir of all things.* The Trial of thy Legitimation, whether thou art a true and genuine Son of God, will lie upon thy Obedience to his Commands;  
 1 Joh. 3. 9. *For in this, says the Apostle, the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil: Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; and whosoever doth not Righteousness, is not of God.* Now if by our Obedience and Dutifulness it appears that we are indeed the Children of God, our Father will certainly give us a Child's Portion, and that is no less than a Kingdom. So saith our Saviour,  
 Luk. 12. 32. *Fear not, little Flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*

3. Those that do God's Com- 3.  
mandments have a *Right* to Eternal *A Right of*  
Life, by *Promise* and *Stipulation*; and *Promise.*  
therefore it is called *Eternal Life*, Tit. 1. 2.  
*which God that cannot lie hath promised.*  
Indeed, the whole Tenour of the  
Gospel is nothing else but the Ex-  
hibition of this Promise, and a  
Comment upon it. This is the Summ  
of the Gospel, the Terms of the  
Covenant, the Indenture made be-  
tween God and Man; *If thou wilt* Matth. 19.  
*enter into Life*, says our Saviour, *keep* 17.  
*the Commandments.* And in another  
place our Lord tells us, *Not eve-* Matth. 7.  
*ry one that saith unto me Lord, Lord,* 21.  
*shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;*  
*but he that doth the Will of my Father*  
*which is in Heaven.*

And thus you see what *Right* it  
is, that Obedience to the Com-  
mands of God gives us to Eternal  
Life: *A Right of Evidence*, *a Right*  
*of Heirship*, and *a Right of Promise.*  
But,

Object.

*But, may some say, Is not this again to establish the antiquated Covenant of Works; Do this, and live? And doth not this abolish the Law of Faith, He that believeth shall be saved? Is it not the Office of Faith alone to convey unto us a Right and Title unto Eternal Life?*

Answer.

*I answer, No, it doth no prejudice unto Faith; for we still affirm, that our original and fundamental Right to Heaven is grounded, not upon our Obedience, but Christ's; not upon our Works, but upon his; his Merits and Purchase, which, through Faith, are imparted and imputed to us. Yet give me leave to say, that I think the Notion of Justifying and Saving Faith is very much, if not generally mistaken by us: And as the Soul is the most noble, and most vital Principle of Man, and yet is most unknown to him what it is, and how it operates;*

rates ; so Faith, which is the vital Principle of Christians, and by which the Just are said to live, is yet most unknown, both as to its Nature and Operations, unto the Generality of them : Some place it in Assurance, some in Affiance and Recumbence ; some in one Act of Faith, and some in another ; which are either the Effects of Faith as true, or the Degrees of it as strong, rather than the proper and adequate Nature and Essence of it ; and then they mightily puzzle themselves how to accord and reconcile Faith and Obedience in carrying on the great Work of our Salvation, which yet were never at a variance about it, but only in their mistaken *Hypothesis* : For what is Faith, but an Assent to a Testimony ? The very force and import of the Word can carry no other Sense : And he that saith he believes, must needs mean he believes some Record or Testimony ;

testimony; or else he speaks that which neither himself, nor any other can understand. Consequently therefore a Divine Faith must be an Assent to a Divine Testimony; that is, to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. But now if this Faith rest only in a bare and naked Assent to the Truth of Divine Revelation, it is but Historical and Dogmatical; which, though it be a Divine Faith in respect of the Objects believed, yet is it but Humane and Natural in respect of its Principle and Motives. But when this Assent to the Truths of the Scripture is joined with proportionable Affections to those Truths, and doth excite us to Actions conformable to the Discoveries of the Divine Will, there this Faith is Justifying and Saving. And certainly this is not so very distant from Obedience, as to be thought hardly recon-

reconcilable with it. As for Instance, A Man may give a bare Assent to this great Gospel-Truth, that *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, and yet this Faith may not save him, because it may be unoperative, and pass no farther than the Act of the Understanding : This is a dead Faith, which can never bring any Man to Heaven ; yea, such a Faith as the very *Devils* and *Damned* Jam. 2. 19. *Spirits* in Hell have, *who believe and tremble*. Another Man believes the same Truth, and assents to the same Proposition ; but this his Assent influenceth his Affections, and governs his Actions, in Conformity to the Nature and Consequences of such a Belief : And because he is assured that Jesus Christ came into the World to be the Saviour of it, therefore he loves him, trusts in him, relies upon him, hopes in his Promises, and obeys his Commands.

*What Saving Faith is.*

mands. And this, indeed, is a true Saving, Justifying Faith; for Saving Faith is a firm Assent unto the Truths of God revealed in the holy Scriptures, working in us proportionable Affections and Actions. He who so believes *the Glory of Heaven*, as to have his Endeavours thereby quickned to use his utmost Diligence for the obtaining of it: He who so believes *the Torments of Hell*, as thereby to be terrified from doing any thing that might expose him to so great and fearful a Condemnation: He who so believes *the Attributes of God*, as thereby to be excited to fear him for his Greatness, to love him for his Goodness, to imitate him in his Bounty, Purity, and Holiness: He who so believes *the All-sufficiency, Merits, and Mediator Office of Jesus Christ*, as thereby to be engaged with all his Soul to love him, to trust in him,

to rely upon him alone for Salvation, and to yield to him all sincere Obedience, as the Law requires ; such an one's Faith is Saving and Justifying. So that you see there is no such Discord between Faith and Works, as some would imagine; for that Faith that saves us, *must work by Love* ; and those Works Gal. 5. 6. which capacitate us for Salvation, must be *the Obedience of Faith*, as Rom. 16. 26. it is called, *Rom. 16. 26.*

Now, What is the End of all *Use.* this, but to press you to true practical Holiness, and a strict Obedience to the Commandments of God ? If I should go from one Person to another, and ask you one by one, Do you hope to be saved ? Where is the Man that would not testifie the Confidence of his Hopes, by his Disdain at the *Question* ? Yea, but remember that Salvation is a litigious Claim, and you have a power-

powerful Adversary that puts in a strong Plea against you, even the Justice of God, and his Eternal Wrath and Vengeance; whose Title to us, were it but better weighed and considered, would wofully stagger the Hopes of most Men, and make their Faces gather Blackness, and smite their Hearts with Amazement, and their Knees with Trembling. In a Matter of such infinite Importance, it highly concerns us to examine our *Right* and *Title*, and to peruse and try our *Evidences*, lest at the Day of Trial we be cast in our Suit, and pay dreadful Damages unto the Justice of God.

Only those who *do God's Commandments* have this *Right to the Tree of Life*. Christ hath indeed purchased Salvation for all, but *he is the Author of Salvation only to those who obey him*, as the Author to the Hebrews speaks: And, *Without Holiness no Man shall*

Heb. 5. 19.

Heb. 2. 14.

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*shall ever see the Lord.* The Inheritance is indeed purchased, but where are your Evidences of your *Heirship*? Sirs, flatter not your selves with any vain Conceits of the Mercy of the Gospel, in prejudice to the Authority of the Law: The Commandments are the Statute-Law of God's Kingdom, the Gospel is his Court of Chancery; but neither Justice nor Equity will relieve those who have not done their utmost to observe his Statute-Law; and therefore those who indulge themselves in their Sloth, and wilful Neglect, both of what they ought, and might have done, do but deceive their Souls with vain Hopes; they have no *Right* to the *Eternal Inheritance*, but their Portion must forever be with *Dogs and Swine*, without the *holy City* into which no unclean thing shall ever enter. And if any think this Legal Preaching, let mine ever be so.

THE  
RESURRECTION  
OF  
CHRIST, &c.

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ACT. II. xxiv.

*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the Pains of Death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

*Introduc-  
tion.*

CHRISTIAN Religion is founded upon such mysterious and supernatural Truths, and the Principles of it are so paradoxal to the received Opinions of Mankind, that the greatest Persecution it ever found in the World, was not so much from Fire and Sword, Racks and

and Tortures, the evident Cruelties of the first Opposers of it, as from the Magisterial Dictates of partial and corrupt Reason.

The *Philosophers*, whom *Tertullian* calls the *Patrons of Hereticks*, have established Two peremptory *Maxims*, utterly repugnant unto what the *Scripture* reveals to us, both concerning our Happiness and Comfort: The one is, *Ex nihilo, nihil habetur*: Out of nothing, nothing can be made; directly levell'd against the Creation of the World. And the other is, *A privatione ad habitum non datur Regressus*: There is no Restoration of the same Being, after a total Corruption and Dissolution of it; which still continues a great Prejudice against the Resurrection of our Bodies; which the *Oracles of Reason* have so much troubled the World with, that whatsoever seem'd in the least contradictory to it, they

judged contradictory to common Sense, and exploded it as ridiculous and impossible. Under these great Disadvantages the *Christian Religion* labour'd, whilst it not only own'd the Creation of the World out of nothing, formerly described by *Moses*; but more clearly and openly attested the Resurrection of the Dead, which before was not either so clearly known, or so clearly proved; for these Doctrines were held so absurd by the great *Sophisters* of the World, whose Minds were too deeply tinctur'd with contrary Notions, that they look'd upon the *Christian Religion* as a Design rather to destroy *Reason*, than to save the Soul; accounting it a very absurd thing to believe in a crucified Saviour, as being a Person weak and impotent; or the future Resurrection, as being a thing utterly impossible.

We

We find the *Apostle* to the *Corin-* 1 Cor. i.  
*thians* complaining, that the *Greeks*, <sup>24.</sup>  
 who were then the great Masters of  
 Wisdom and Learning, esteemed a  
 crucified Christ Foolishness, and  
 thought those Men little befriended  
 by *Reason*, that would depend  
 for Life upon one that lost his own;  
 and venture to take off the Shame-  
 fulness of the *Cross*, or to silence  
 those Scoffs that were cast upon  
 them for their Credulity, who af-  
 firm the wonderful *Resurrection* of  
 a dead Saviour, and his glorious  
 Triumph over *Death* and the *Grave*.  
 For this seemed to them no other  
 than to solve an Absurdity by an  
 Impossibility, and make Reason  
 more suspicious, in that they judg-  
 ed the Fundamentals of *Reason*  
 must be overthrown, to make the  
 Fundamentals of *Christianity* anyway  
 tolerable or possible. Wherefore  
 we find that even at *Athens*, that great

Concourse of Wits, where all the *Sect* of *Philosophers* made their common Retreat ; yet when Saint *Paul* preached to them *Jesus*, and the *Resurrection*, this Doctrine seem'd so absurd and foolish to them, and so contrary to all Principles of right *Reason*, that they forgot that Civility that usually is found in Men of inquisitive Spirits, and brake out into open Reproaches and Revilings ; *What will this Babler say ? because he preached to them Jesus, and the Resurrection.* No doubt they wanted not very specious Arguments to urge against the *Resurrection* of the Body : As first, The Impossibility of a Recollection of the dispersed Particles of Men, resolved into their Elements, and scatter'd by the Four Winds of Heaven ; though it might be very well retorted on the *Epicureans*, who disputed with Saint *Paul*,

*Paul*, against the *Resurrection*, that it was not so unlikely a thing, that there might be a Re-union of the scatter'd Parts of the same Man, as the fortuitous Concourse of *Atoms* at the first Making of the World; yet this *Objection* overbore and prevail'd with *Heathens*, that when they burnt the Bodies of *Christians*, they cast their Ashes into the Rivers, to confute their Hopes of ever being raised again; from whence they should be carried away into an unknown *Ocean*, and there be made the Sport of Winds and Waves. But what our *Saviour* says upon the same Occasion to the *Sadduces*, may be said unto these Men; *You err, not know-* Matth. 22.  
*ing the Scriptures, nor the Power of* <sup>29</sup>  
*God*: For unless their Parts could be scatter'd beyond the reach of *Omnipotency*, unless they could be ground so small, as to scape the

*Knowledge and Care of God, who ordereth and rangeth every Mote that plays up and down in the Sunbeams; this Dispersion of the Body proves not the Impossibility of their Union, because the Power and Providence of God will gather up every Dust, and rally them together again, into the same Place and Order as now they are.*

*Objection.*

Another Argument against the *Resurrection of the Body*, may be the various Changes dead Bodies undergo; being first turn'd into Earth, that again turn'd into Grass and Herbs, that becoming Nourishment for other Men or Beasts, that Nourishment again passing into their Substance, making a kind of *Transmigration of Bodies*, as *Pythagoras* would have there was of Souls: which is very evident in the Case of *Anthropomorphites*, and *Men-Eaters*, who have, of several parts of  
other

other Men's Bodies, compounded their own. And so the same *Question* may be demanded, which the *Sadduces* asked our *Saviour*, concerning the seven Brethren that married the same Woman, *whose Wife of the seven she should be at the Resurrection?* So here, those Parts that belonged to so many Men, to which of them belong they in the *Resurrection*, without detriment to the rest? Here the same Answer occurs, that Christ gave them; *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God; who is the best Judge of Property, and can resolve all those Parts, by which any Nourishment hath been received by any other Creatures, unto their own proper Bodies again.* Matth. 22. 29.

And thus it appears, these *Arguments* against the *Resurrection* of the Body, amount not to prove the Impossibility of the Effect; but only the

the Supernatural Almighty Power of the Efficient. Wherefore, granting the *Resurrection* impossible, according to the Original Course of Natural Things, yet when an Omnipotent Arm doth interpose, which gives Laws unto it, who dares to say, the Creature may be brought to such a State of Dissolution, as may out-reach the Dominion of the Almighty Creator.

Upon these Grounds it is, that Act. 26. 8. the *Apostle* urgeth, *why it should be thought a strange and incredible thing, that God should raise the Dead*; and in the *Text*, that he asserts the *Resurrection* of *Christ*. And to prevent any fallacious Cavils against it, he shews,

I. *First, That God raised him from the Dead*; and therefore it was not to be accounted a thing impossible, since to God nothing could imply a Contradiction.

*Division of  
the Words.*

*Secondly,*

Secondly, He doth not only assert II.  
the Possibility, but the Impossibili-  
ty of his final Continuance under  
the Power of Death. The Grave  
that grasps and retains all other  
Mortals, was not able to detain  
him who hath Immortality and  
Lifedwelling in himself: *It was not  
possible he should be holden of it, there-  
fore God hath raised him up, loosing  
the Pains of Death. Whom God raised  
up:* Here is the Efficient Cause of  
Christ's Resurrection, in the concur-  
rent Action of the whole Trinity;  
for all that God doth out of him-  
self, is ascribed to all the Three Per-  
sons. Sometimes it is ascribed to the  
Father, as the *Apostle* speaks, *The* Acts 3. 13.  
*God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of* 15.  
*Jacob; the God of our Fathers, hath  
glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delive-  
red up, and denied the Holy One, and  
the Just, desiring a Murtherer; and kil-  
led the Prince of Life, whom God hath  
raised*

*raised from the Dead.* Sometimes it is ascribed to the Son, who by the infinite Power of his Divinity, raised up his Humane Nature from the Grave: So our Saviour himself tells

Joh. 3. 18. *US, I lay down my Life of my self: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.* The same may

Rom. 8.  
11.

be collected of the Holy Ghost, from the Words of the Apostle; *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit.* Now if the Spirit of God can quicken our Bodies, the same Spirit also can quicken the Body of Christ, since it is the same Spirit that quickens both the Head, and the Members.

*Having loosed the Pains of Death:* In some Copies it is, *Having loosed the Pains of Hell;* which possibly gave Occasion to that fond Opinion of some, that Christ descended in-

to Hell, and there underwent the Pains and Penalties of that infernal Place, as full Satisfaction to the Justice of God ; and that these were the Pains God raised or loosed him from in his *Resurrection*. But this Conceit is erroneous and extravagant, and deserves no serious Confutation, especially because it plainly contradicts Christ's *Consummatum est* upon the Cross ; for when Christ had undergone his Sufferings on the Cross, he said, *It is finished, and so* Joh 18.13. *gave up the Ghost*. If Christ therefore did undergo any farther Sufferings and Pains than those Sufferings he underwent on the Cross, those Sufferings would have been so far from being compleated and finished that they would have been but the *Praeludium*, and Begianing of his Torrows. *Having loosed the Pains of Death*, it implies no more but that God raised Jesus Christ from

from Death, which, after many dolorous Pains, he suffered. It follows, *It was not possible he should be holden of it.* This is that I intend principally to insist upon; and here I shall shew upon what Accounts it was altogether impossible for Christ to be detained under the Power of Death; and my *Arguments* for the Proof hereof are these that follow.

*Reasons  
why Christ  
could not  
be held un-  
der the  
Power of  
Death.*

I.

*Because of  
the Hypo-  
statical  
Union.*

*First,* It was impossible Christ should be held under the Power of Death, because of that great and ineffable Mystery of the Hypostatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Person of Christ. There are three *Unions*, the Belief of which are the Foundation of the greatest part of the *Christian Religion*, which are wholly beyond the reach of Reason: The *Mystical Union* of a Believer unto Christ: The *Union*, or rather *Unity* of the three Glorious Persons, *the Father, the Son, and the*

*Holy*

*Holy Ghost*, in one Nature ; and this *Hypostatical Union* of two Natures in one Person, in the Mediator. It is a Mystery *Angels* pry into, and adore, with Wonder and Astonishment, how the Eternal, only begotten Son of God should assume Flesh to himself, in so close and intimate a Conjunction, that though he be Eternal, yet he should be born ; though he be Immortal, yet he should truly die ; and though he were truly dead, yet he should raise himself to Life again. These are things that seem very inconsistent one with another, yet they truly come to pass through this miraculous Union, which transcends the Reach of *Reason*, as far as these things do that of Nature. That the same Person that is Eternal, should be young ; yea, be born in the Fulness of Time. That the same Person that hath Immortality  
and

and Life dwelling in himself, should also die a shameful and accursed Death. That the same Person that was truly and really dead, yet had a power to quicken and recover himself, *Joh. 10. 18.* And this was it which declared him to be the Son of God with Power, as the *Apostle* speaks, even by his Resurrection from the Dead. And indeed, if he had not risen from the Dead; the Deity would have suffered in the Opinion of the World; nor would they have believed him to be the Son of God, who would suffer himself to lie under the Dominion of *Death*, longer than the End of his *Death* required it: And this I shall demonstrate to you by two Arguments; only premising this, which is a common and true Maxim among Divines; *That when the Natural Union between Christ's Body and Soul was dissolved, yet both Soul and Body did retain the*  
Hypo-

*Hypostatical Union to the Divine Nature. The Divine Nature was united to the Body of Christ, when the Soul was separated from it.*

I. If Christ could not have raised himself, it must have been either from a Want of Power, or from a Want of Will to do it. He could not want Power to raise himself, because he was God, equal in Power, and in all other Divine Attributes, with the Father. As the *Resurrection of the Dead* is not impossible to the infinite Power of God, so neither can it be that that God who had a Will to assume our Flesh, should want a Will to raise it up : That that God who so lov'd the Humane Nature, as to associate it into Oneness of Person with himself, should yet suffer it to continue under the power of *Death*, which is, of all things, most contrary to his natural Inclinations. We see

H Christ,

Christ, in his *Agony*, prayed most fervently that the bitter Cup might pass from him, insomuch that he strained clotted Blood through him; and certainly, one Ingredient into that Cup was the Separation of Soul and Body by *Death*; which is that which even innocent Nature it self abhorred, as destructive to him; yet having taken our Nature upon him for this very End, *Heb. 2.14.* that by *Death* he might destroy him that had the power of *Death*, that is, the Devil, he voluntarily submitted himself to undergo it; and this End being fully accomplish'd by his *Death*, and the Truth of his *Death* likewise attested by his lying three Days in the Earth, it was altogether impossible that that Person who had an Abhorrence of *Death*, and a Power to raise himself, should continue longer under the Arrest and Dominion of it. And this is the *first Demonstration*

monstration of the Necessity of the Resurrection of Christ, upon the Account of both Natures in one Person: As Man, so he abhorred the Separation of Soul and Body; as God, so he was able to re-unite them: So that having, as Man, a Desire to live, and as God, a Power to live, it was impossible for him to be holden of *Death*.

II. Because of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Person of Christ, it was impossible that his Flesh should see Corruption; which yet it must certainly have done, had he not been raised in a short space after his Death. for since Christ's Body was not a phantastical Body, as some of old held, but made of true Flesh, and of the same Temper and Constitution with ours, it must, without a *Miracle*, have undergone such Changes after *Death* as ours shall do;

and to imagine the contrary, is but to feign one *Miracle*, to avoid the necessity of another, even of the *Resurrection*. But now, it was utterly impossible, that that Body that was united to both Natures, by so close and unconceivable a Bond, should ever see Corruption; that is, a Putrefaction in the Grave: This the *Scripture* clearly asserts to

Act. 2. 28. US; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption.* And also, because all Bodies that are corrupted turn into some other Thing, and some other Nature, according to that undoubted Maxim of the *Philosophers*, *Corruptio unius est Generatio alterius*: And so this horrid and blasphemous Consequence would follow, that the Divine Nature of the Son of God might have been joyned to some other. So that it was necessary that Christ should be raised

raised again, before any Corruption or Putrefaction, by ordinary Course of Nature, seized upon him.

Thus I have proved by these *two Arguments*, that because of the *Hypostatical Union* of the Divine and Humane Nature of Christ in one Person, it was altogether impossible he could be holden of *Death*.

Secondly, Another *Argument* is this, II.  
It was impossible Christ should be holden of *Death*, because of God's Veracity, and the Truth of those Predictions which were before made concerning Christ, in those many *Types* and *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament*; all which God's Faithfulness stood engaged to fulfil. I shall only mention that famous *Prediction* which St. *Peter* here subjoins, as a Proof of the Subject I am now treating upon: *It was not possible*, says he, *that Christ should be* Act. 2. 23.  
*holden of Death*; for God, saith the 27.

*Apostle*, as *David* saith concerning him; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption.* And this *Prophecy* the *Apostle* quotes out of the *Psalmist*; which, that it did not belong to *David*, nor did he speak it concerning himself, when he indicted that *Psalm*, the *Apostle* proves, *Ver.* *29, 30.* of this *Chapter*; where he proves that *David* was dead and buried, and underwent the common Lot that all other dead Bodies did, putrefying and mouldering away in the Earth; and therefore he was not that *Holy One* that should never see Corruption, because that *Prophecy* must belong to such an one who must so taste of *Death*; and this is clearly implied in the former Expression, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, in the State of the Dead, for so is *Hell* to be understood there, as I shall shew more

more at large : Neither could it belong to any of those who, before Christ , were raised miraculously from the Dead, and brought back out of the State of *Death* ; yet was it not in such a manner, that they were not to return again to it : So that if they did not in the first, yet in their second Dying they saw Corruption. This then could belong to none of them, and therefore must of necessity belong to Christ. And since the *Apostle* lays so much stress on this Argument, give me leave a little to consider the meaning of it, and how it is applicable to him. And here I shall not trouble you with the various *Opinions* of those that have attempted to interpret these Words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell* ; that by this *Hell*, into which Christ descended, is meant the place of the Damned, where he preached the

*Gospel* to them, freeing those that would believe from their Pains. Others think that this Hell, into which Christ descended, was one great Partition of it, called *Limbus Patrum*, the Repository of the Souls of those *Fathers* who died in Obedience to God, and in Faith to the *Messias*, before Christ came in the *Flesh*: And the Reason of his Descent thither was, that he might release those Souls from Chains, and carry them with him to Heaven; so that ever since, that *Mansion* in Hell hath been left void, without any Inhabitants. But this *Opinion* is not capable of any sufficient Proof; I shall therefore give you that Interpretation and Judgment which carries with it the strongest Current, both of *Scripture* and *Reason*. The Word *Hades*, that we translate Hell, is very often, by the *Septuagint*, in the *Old Testament*,

*Testament*, used to signifie the *Grave*, or the State of the Dead. So in *Gen. 44. Ishades*, we translate it the *Grave*, but it is the same Word <sup>Gen. 44. 31.</sup> that is used for *Hell* in the *Text*. And thus the Word is used in other places of *Scripture*, as also in other *Authors*, to signifie the Place and State of the *Dead*, and of separate Souls. And for the leaving the Soul of Christ in *Hades*, or in *Hell*, we must know, that it is a thing that is not unusual in *Scripture*, to call a Man that is dead by the Name of *Soul*: So the *Septuagint* translate that place in *Leviticus*, *They shall not be defiled with dead Souls*, meaning dead Carcases, neither shall they go into any dead Souls, the Word is dead Bodies. But not to detain you any longer on this Speculation, though of great use for the right understanding of this excellent place of *Scripture*;

*Levit. 21. 11.*

ture: If we take *Hell* for the *Grave*, we must take the *Soul* for the *Body*; *Thou wilt not leave my Body in the Grave*: But if by *Hell* be here understood the State of *Death*, that is, the State of Separation of *Soul* and *Body*, the Interpretation will be more easie and natural, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul* in a State of Separation from the *Body*, but wilt certainly unite them together again, and raise me up before I shall feel Corruption. Thus I have given you the Interpretation of the *Prophecy* of *David*, which, upon the Account of God's Truth and Veracity, was to take effect in the *Resurrection* of our Saviour; and therefore being foretold he *should not see Corruption*, the Faithfulness of God was obliged within that time inviolably to raise him up. And that is the second *Reason* why it was impossible *Christ* should

should be holden of Death, because it was foretold of him, *that his Soul should not rest in Hell*; that is, either his Body in the Grave, or his Soul in a State of Separation from his Body.

*Thirdly, Another Argument is this:* III.  
*It was impossible Christ could be holden by Death, upon the Account of God's Justice.* For Justice, as it doth oblige to inflict Punishment upon the Guilty, so also to absolve and acquit the Innocent. Now, though Christ *knew no Sin*, yet was he *made Sin for us*; that is, our Sins were imputed to, and charged upon him, and so, through a voluntary Susception and Undertaking of them, he became guilty of them: Hereupon Divine Justice seized upon him, as being our Surety, and demanded Satisfaction from him for our Offences: Now no other Satisfaction would be acceptable

*God's Justice would not suffer Christ to lie in the Grave.*

ceptable unto God, nor commensurate to our Sins, but the bearing of an infinite Load of Wrath and Vengeance; which if it had been laid upon us, must have been prolonged to an Eternity of Sufferings; for because we are finite Creatures, we cannot bear infinite Degrees of Wrath at once, and therefore we must have lain under those infinite Degrees of Wrath to an infinite Duration: But now Christ being God, he could bear the Load of infinite Degrees of Wrath at once upon him. In that one bitter Draught, the whole Cup of that Fury and Wrath of God, that we should have been everlastingly a drinking off, by little Drops, Christ drank off at once. Now it is the *Nature and Constitution* of all *Laws*, that when a Person by undergoing the Penalty that those *Laws* require, hath made

satisfaction

satisfaction for the Offence committed, the Person satisfying ought to be protected as innocent. It could not therefore consist with the *Justice of God*, that when Christ had satisfied his utmost Demands, that any of the punishment due to our Sins, for which he satisfied, should have lain upon him longer; for that would have been no other than punishing without an Offence. Now nothing is clearer in *Scripture*, than that *Death* is a punishment inflicted upon us for Sin: So says the Apostle; *The Wages of Sin is Death.* Rom. 6. 23 And in another place, *By Sin Death enter'd into and 5. 12. the World, and Death passed upon all, because all have sinned.* From all which it follows, that as Christ taking upon him our Sins, became thereby liable to *Death*; so having satisfied for our Sins, and thereby freed himself from the Guilt that he

he lay under by Imputation, he was no longer liable unto *Death*, which is one part of the punishment he underwent; so that it could not have been agreeable to infinite Justice, that Christ should have been holden of *Death*, who by his undergoing of *Death*, hath sustained the whole Load of God's infinite Wrath and Displeasure, and fully satisfied for all those Sins that were imputed to him, and therefore ought in justice to be acquitted from all Penalties, and consequentially from *Death*.

IV. *Fourthly, It was impossible Christ should be holden of Death, in respect of his Office of Mediatorship: For having as our Mediator undertaken the desperate Service of bringing sinfull and fallen Man to Life and Happiness, he must of necessity not only dye but rise again from the dead, without which his Death*

*Christ could not be holden of Death, because of his Mediatorship.*

and

and whatever else he did or suffered for us, would have been of no avail. There are two Things, requisite, before any real or eternal Benefit can become ours.

*First*, A meritorious purchase, procuring the Thing it self for us.

*Secondly*, An effectual Application of that Benefit to us. The Purchase of Mercy was made by the *Death of Christ*, by which a full Price was paid down to the Justice of God. But the effectual Application of Mercy is by the *Life and Resurrection of Christ*. Wherefore if Christ had only dyed, and not risen again; if he had not overcome *Death* within its own *Empire*, and triumph'd over the *Grave* in its own *Territories*, it would have been to his Disappointment, and not at all to our Salvation. The Loss of Christ's Life would not have procured

procured Life for us, unless as he laid it down with Freedom ; so he had again restored it with Power. Our hope of Salvation otherwise would have been buried in the same Grave with himself ; but what he died to procure, he lives to confer. It was Ignorance of *Christ's Resurrection from the Dead*, that so stagger'd the two *Disciples* going to *Emaus*: They tell Christ himself a sad Story of one *Jesus of Nazareth*, that was condemned and crucified, who, while he lived among us, by his Word and Works testified himself to be the true *Messiah*, we little thought of his Dying ; and when he told us of his *Death*, he likewise foretold us of his *Resurrection the third Day* ; and behold, the *third Day* is already come, and yet is there no Appearance of this *Jesus*: *Verily, we trusted that it had been he which should have re-*  
*deemed*

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deemed Israel ; but now our Hopes grow faint, and languish in us ; for certainly, there can be no *Redemption* for *Israel* by him who cannot redeem himself from Death. There was nothing in the World did so much prejudice the *Gospel*, and hinder its taking place in the Hearts of *Heathens* in the *Primitive Times*, as this of the Cross and Death of Christ ; for believing that he was lifted up upon the *Cross*, but not believing that he was raised up from the *Dead*, they assented to their *Natural Reason*, which herein taught them, That it was Folly to expect Life from him who could not either preserve or restore his own.

It is true, it was Folly thus to hope, but that his Life applies what his Death deserv'd ; and our Salvation begun on the Cross, is perfected on the Throne. And

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there-

1 Cor. 15. therefore the *Apostle* tells us, our  
17. Faith in a crucified Saviour, and  
our Obedience to him is all vain,  
if he had not risen again from the  
Dead: For unless he had risen  
from the Dead, he could not have  
acquitted us from the Guilt of Sin,  
because he could not have been ju-  
stified himself. We are justified by  
the Righteousness of Christ, as the  
Rom. 4. 25 *Apostle* speaks, in his Epistle to the  
*Romans*; which Righteousness he  
wrought out for us, both by his  
perfect Obedience to the Law, and  
by his Submission to the Punish-  
ment of the Law: But yet this  
Righteousness could not have avai-  
led to our Justification, had he  
not, after the Fulfilling of it, risen  
again from the Dead; because he  
himself had not been justified,  
much less could we have been ju-  
stified by one who could not have  
justified himself. And therefore

We

we read, *Great is the Mystery of* <sup>1 Tim. 3.</sup>  
*Godliness*, says the *Apostle*; *God ma-* <sup>16.</sup>  
*nifested in the Flesh*, in his Incarna-  
tion; *justified in the Spirit*, by his  
Resurrection; *seen of Angels*, in his  
Ascension. Had he not been rai-  
sed and quickned by the Spirit,  
that is, by the glorious Power of  
his Divine Nature, he had not  
been declared just, nor could he  
have justified us: For this Decla-  
ration, that Christ was just, was  
made upon the Resurrection of his  
Body from the Dead; by which he  
was set free from all those Penal-  
ties due to our Sins that were im-  
puted to him. If therefore the Ju-  
stification and Salvation of Sinners  
was a Design laid by the infinite  
Wisdom of God, it must needs fol-  
low, that it was impossible for  
Christ to be kept under Death,  
because that would have obstructed  
their Justification and Salvation,

and so would have brought a Disappointment upon the infinite Wisdom of God, which was impossible to be done ; and therefore consequentially Christ could not be holden of Death.

The Application of this great Truth shall be briefly in these following Inferences.

*Use*

I.

*First* then, If it was impossible for Christ not to have risen from the Dead, it is evident then that Christ is the true *Messiah* : For had he been an Impostor, or *False Prophet*, it would have been so far from an Impossibility that he should not have been raised, that it would have been a very Impossibility for him to have risen again ; for neither could he have raised himself, being a mere Man ; neither would God have raised him, being a mere *Impostor* and *Cheat*. When therefore the *Jews* call'd for a *Sign* from Christ,

Christ, to prove him to be the true Messiah, he gives them the Sign of his Resurrection, in *Matth. 12. 38, 39.* Master, say they, we would see a <sup>*Matth. 12. 38, 39.*</sup> Sign from thee. He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous Generation seeketh after a Sign, and there shall be no Sign given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, so shall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth. So again, when they tempted him at another time, for a Sign of his being the Messiah, he still instances in his powerful Resurrection from the Dead, in *Joh. 2. 18, 19.* The Jews answered and said unto him, What Sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up. So that still he made his Death and Re-

*Resurrection* to be the infallible Proof of his being the true *Messiah*.

*Use*  
II.

*Secondly*, If it were necessary that Christ should rise from the Dead, and that he did do so, then certainly Sin is conquered ; for the Sting of Death, and that envenom'd Weapon Death hath, whereby it wounds, yea kills the Sinner, is Sin ; and as long as Death hath this Sting in it, it could not have been conquer'd by any Sinner. It is Sin that gives Death its Power to hold fast all those that come within its reach ; which since it could not do with Christ, it is evident Sin is subdued by Christ, who was in its Arms and Grasp, but yet came safe out from it, taking away the Sting and Weapon of Death with him.

*Use*  
III.

*Thirdly*, If the *Resurrection* of Christ be thus necessary, and hath been thus effectually accomplished,

we

we may comfortably from thence conclude the Necessity of our own *Resurrection* ; for the Head being raised , the Members shall not always sleep in the Dust. Christ's *Mystical* Body shall certainly be raised , as well as his *Natural* Body ; and every Member of it shall be made for ever glorious, with a glorious and triumphant Head.

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## Brotherly Admonition, &c.

LEV. xix. 17.

*Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.*

**W**AVING all *Prefaces* and *Introductions*, we may observe in these Words Three

*Division of  
the Words.*

Parts.

- I. *First*, A Negative Command, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart*: which implies in it the contrary positive Precept, *Thou shalt love thy Brother.*

*Secondly,*

*Secondly,* A Direction how we 2.  
should preserve our selves from  
this rancoured Vice of Hatred,  
and expresse our more cordial  
Love, in the best Service we can  
do for him ; *Thou shalt in any wise  
rebuke thy Neighbour.*

*Thirdly,* A forcible Motive to 3.  
excite us unto the performance  
of this Duty, drawn from the  
Consideration of the great Bene-  
fit which will in likelihood re-  
dound to him by the conscien-  
tious discharge of it. By this  
means thou wilt not *suffer Sin  
to lie upon him* : implying, That if  
this charitable Duty of *Fraternal  
Reproof* be neglected, he will still  
continue in his Sins, his Guilt  
will remain upon him, and thou  
wilt be accessory to it.

I shall not consider any of  
these Particulars by themselves,  
but treat only of what is here  
chiefly

chiefly intended, namely, the necessity of that much neglected Duty of *Brotherly Reproof and Admonition.*

And here I shall prosecute this Method with all possible Brevity and Perspicuity.

1. *First*, Shew you what *Brotherly Correction* is.
2. *Secondly*, The Difficulty of it.
3. *Thirdly*, The Necessity of it.
4. *Fourthly*, Lay down some Rules and Directions how it ought to be performed.
5. *Fifthly*, Lay before you some Considerations that may be powerful Motives and Engagements to it.

1. *First*, What *Brotherly Reproof or Correction* is.

*What Brotherly Reproof is.*

To this I answer in brief, It is an Act of Love and Charity, whereby we endeavour to reduce

our

our offending Brother to Repen-  
tance and Reformation : And  
there are two ways of doing it,  
either by *Words* or *Actions*.

*First*, By *Words*; remonstrating 1.  
to them the greatness of their *Reproof is by*  
Sin, the Scandal they give to *Words.*  
others, either by encouraging, or  
saddening them; the Reproach  
they bring upon Religion, and  
the Danger they bring upon their  
own Souls. But if they be deaf  
to all these *Admonitions*, and con-  
tinue obstinate and resolv'd in  
their evil Courses, we are then  
to reprove them.

*Secondly*, By *Actions*; That 2.  
where Words have proved in- *Reproof may be*  
effectual, we may try how Deeds *by Actions.*  
can prevail. Prevail, I say, ei-  
ther to deliver them, or at least,  
to deliver thine own Soul from  
Death. And this also must be  
done these two ways.

*First,*

I.

*Reproof of Inferiours, is to be by Authority.*

*First*, If they be our Inferiours over whom we have Authority, either as *Magistrates*, or *Parents*, or the like ; we ought, when *Admonition* and *Correption* is fruitless, to reprove them by *Correktion* and *Punishment* : If they will not hear, they must feel Rebuke. This *Discipline* if it be seasonably and prudently used , is so far from being any Act of Cruelty, that it is an Act of the greatest Kindness and Charity that can be both to them and to others.

*Reproof tends to restrain from Sin.*

To them : As it may restrain them from the commission of those future Crimes , to which their Impunity would else embolden them. And thus to fall into the Hands of Men, may be a means to keep them from falling into the Hands of God.

To

To others : As it may terrifie them from following the *Examples* of such an ones Vices, by seeing the *Examples* of his suffering. Thus the Punishment of some is made to become the Innocence of others.

*Secondly*, If they be our Equals, over whom we have no Jurisdiction, nor coercive Power, we are then to rebuke them, if they continue obstinate after *Christian Admonition*, by withdrawing our selves from all necessary Converse with them ; not so as to deny them the Offices of Civility, Courtesie, and our charitable Assistance, to promote their temporal Good ; but to break off all Familiarity and Intimacy with them : not to make such lewd and dissolute Persons our Friends and chosen Companions. Thus the *Apostle* charges

2.

*If Equals continue obstinate under Reproof, we must withdraw Society from them.*

<sup>2</sup> Theff. 3. 6. charges us, *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.* And this way of reprovng them ought to be so managed by us, that it may appear it doth not proceed from any sower, morose, surly Humour, disdainng or hating of their Persons, but merely from Conscience of our Duty towards the Glory of God, and to do an Act of Love and Charity, as indeed it is, both towards them, and towards our selves.

I. *First, Towards them: When you thus endeavour to shame them out of their Wickedness, by discountenancing them in it*

<sup>2</sup> Theff. 3. 14. So says the *Apostle, If any Man obey not our Word, note that Man, and*

and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed. And indeed, if a Man be not altogether profligate, if he be not utterly lost to Modesty, it must needs make him reflect upon himself with Shame and Blushing, that certainly he is grown a strange vile Wretch, a loathsome and odious Monster, when all good and sober Men do thus carefully shun and avoid him. Now Shame is a good step to Amendment : And a Blush the first colour that Virtue takes.

*Secondly,* Towards your selves: You are obliged to abandon them, as to reclaim them, so to secure your selves : For *Vice* is very contagious, and it is unsafe to converse with those, who have such Plague-Sores running upon them, lest you be also infected.

2.

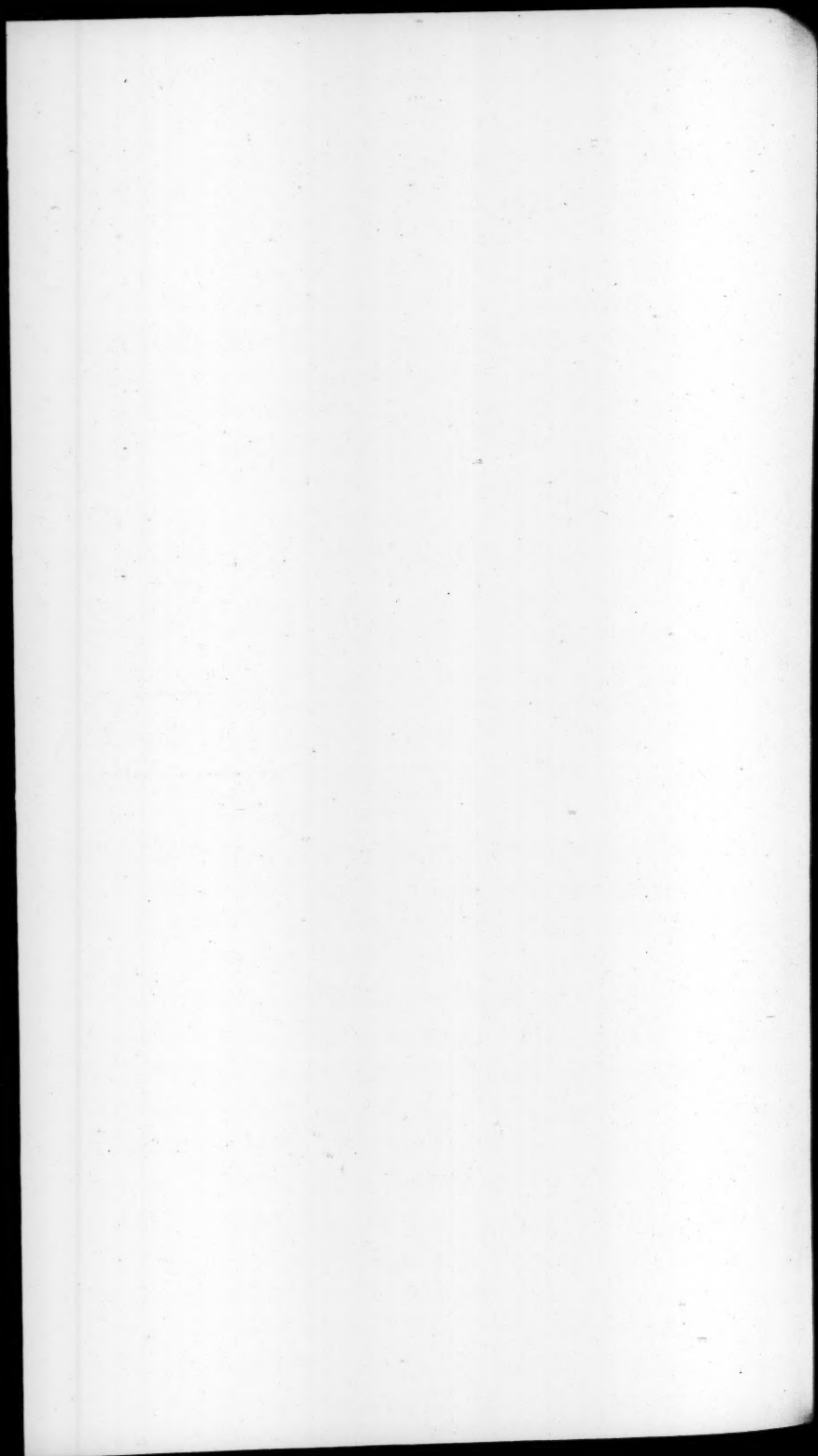
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Thus you see what this Duty of *Brotherly Reproof* is, and how in the general it is to be performed, either in Words or Actions. And to these, Two Things are necessarily previous and antecedent,

I.  
*Conviction of  
the Fault.*

*First*, Instruction and Conviction. We ought to bring them to see their Fault before we rebuke them for it; otherwise while we chide and do not inform them, it will rather seem a proud design of quarrelling with them, than a conscientious Design of bettering them. And therefore we find how artificially *Nathan* insinuates into *David* the hainousness and inhumanity of his Sin, and works in him a Hatred and Detestation of that Person who was so cruel and devoid of Compassion, before he comes to deal downright with

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with him, *Thou art the Man.*  
And could we but skilfully convince our Brother, by thus representing the odiousness of such and such Sins, to which we know he is addicted, possibly we might spare our selves in that which is the most ungrateful and displeasing part of this Work, I mean personal Reflection, and leave it to his own Conscience to reprove himself, and to apply it home, with, *Thou art the Man.* And,

*Secondly,* It is necessary that we watch over our Brother, not so as to be insidious Spies upon him, officiously to pry into his Actions, and busily concern our selves in all he doth. This pragmatical Temper is justly hateful. And those who thus arrogate to themselves to be publick Censors, and to inspect the

2.  
*We ought to  
watch over  
our Brother,*

K                      Lives

Lives and Manners of others, making it their whole Employment to observe what others say or do, that they may have Matter either to reprove or reproach them, are a Company of intolerable busy Bodies. But yet,

1.

*By Caution.*

*First*, We ought so to watch over our Brother as to give him timely Caution if we see him in any danger through Temptation or Passion, and to admonish him to stand upon his guard, to recollect himself and beware he be not surprized or injured by such an approaching Sin.

2.

*The best season.*

And *Secondly*, If we have observed any Miscarriages in him, we are to watch the best Seasons, and all the fittest Circumstances in which to remind him of it, that so our Reproof may be well accepted, and become effectual. For he that will ven-

ture

ture rashly to reprove without this Circumspection, may do more mischief to his Brother by rebuking him, than he had done to himself by offending: Exasperating and imbittering his Heart against Piety, for the Impertinencies, at least the Indiscretions of those who profess it, and provoking him to sin the more out of mere Opposition and Contradiction. And I am verily perswaded, and have in some Cases observed it, that very many Sins owe themselves to the imprudence of those who have taken upon themselves to be Reprovers, and would never have been committed, if they had not indiscreetly gainsay'd it. Thus we see what this Duty of reproving is, and what is necessarily required thereunto.

2.  
*of the difficulty of Reproof.*

But indeed, which is the Second Thing, It is not so hard a Matter to know what it is, as it is difficult conscientiously and faithfully to practise it. How few are there in the World, I will not say skillful enough to do it well, but zealous and conscientious enough to do it at all? Do we not every day see God fearfully dishonoured, observe his Name blasphemed, his Laws violated, his Worship denied? Do you not daily see multitudes of wretched Creatures, whose Crimes not only defie and outrage God, but stab and murder their own Souls; and yet who is there that hath that Zeal for God, or that Charity for his Brother, as to interpose, and by a serious and fitting Reproof, vindicate the one from Dishonour, or rescue the other from Perdi-

Perdition? There are enow that will make up a sad Mouth, and whisper those things abroad, it may be out of very ill Ends and Designs: but where almost is the Person that will dare to maintain the Honour of God to the Face of those who boldly affront him; that will dare to open their Mouths before those that will dare to open them against Heaven? Certainly we can easily produce much more Reason for our Reproofs, than they can for their Wickedness; and it were very strange, if we should not be able to beat them off from their Confidence, when we have God and our own Consciences, nay and theirs also, to side with us. Yet so it is that we are generally apt to sneak and flink away from so troublesome a Task, and to let

Iniquity pass uncontroul'd, yea triumphant. We are well content to let others sin quietly, so that we may live quietly without troubling our selves with so hard and difficult a Service. And that which makes it seem so difficult, is,

1. *First*, A sinful Fear; and,
2. *Secondly*, A sinful Shame, that seizeth on the Spirits of Men, and takes off the edge of holy Courage and Confidence, that are so absolutely necessary to the performing of this Duty.

*I.*  
*Fear of displeasing should not hinder reproofing for Sin.*

*First*, Many are afraid to reprove Sin, lest they should incur Displeasure, weaken their secular Interest, ruine their Dependencies, and bring some Mischief upon themselves, by exasperating the Offenders against them. But these are poor, low, carnal Considerations,

tions. Where Matter of Duty is in question, it is very necessary for every Christian to be of an undaunted Courage and Resolution, not to fear the Faces of Men, nor to be frightened with a grim Look, or a proud Huff. If he will seriously perform this Duty, he must remember, that he is pleading for God, that he is saving a Soul from Hell, and therefore ought not to value their Anger, nor his own Damage; but to steel himself against all such mean and sordid Considerations. Indeed it shews a most pitiful Spirit in us, that we should be more afraid of offending them, than they are of offending God. Shall they be bold to sin, and we not bold enough to tell them of it? And yet such is the Cowardize of the Generality of Christians, that

they dare not appear for God, or for Piety and Holiness, when they see them wronged by the Impudence of boisterous Sinners; but those pitiful, little base carnal Respects of what they may lose, or what they may suffer by it, intervene, and make them sit mopish, and over-aw'd, *like Men in whose Mouths are no Reproofs*; whilst these wicked Wretches, who have all the Reason in the World to be timorous and fearful, glory in thus outbraving and baffling them.

Psalm. 38. 14.

2.

*Shame should  
not hinder Re-  
proving for  
Sin.*

*Secondly*, Others again are ashamed to reprove Sin. And whereas many vile and profligate Wretches glory in their Shame, these on the contrary are ashamed of that which would be their Glory. Either they doubt they shall be thought but troublesome and hypocritical

Inter-

Intermedlers; or else possibly being conscious to themselves of many Miscarriages, they suspect their *Reproofs* will be upbraidingly retorted upon themselves, and so by reproving the Faults of others, they shall but give an occasion to have their own ript up and exposed: And so they think it the safer way to say nothing, lest by raking into other Mens Dunghills, they should but furnish them with Dirt enough to fling back in their own Faces. And thus between these Two carnal Principles of *sinful Fear*, and *sinful Shame*, which are so deeply rooted in our corrupt Natures, *Reproof* is commonly neglected, and it is one of the hardest things in the World, to perswade Men to be true to God, to their own Souls, and to the Souls of their Brethren,

thren, in a faithful discharge of that Duty which is usually attended with such Disadvantages and Difficulties.

But though it be thus difficult ; yet,

3.

*Reproof a very  
necessary Duty.*

*Thirdly,* It is a most necessary Duty. The greatest good you can do in the World is to pluck up these Bryars and Thorns with which it is over-grown. Consider but how insolent Vice and Wickedness is apt to be where none do appear to check and controul it. If it can but once silence Vertue, it will quickly banish it. If it can but put it to the Blush, it will quickly put it to flight. And when it hath once made us either afraid or ashamed to lay a Rebuke in its way, what else can we expect but that it should overspread the Face of the whole Earth, and like

like a general Deluge drown all Mankind, first in Sin, and then in Perdition. There is no other way to prevent this great and sad Ruine, but for every Christian vigorously to oppose himself to the growing Sins of the Times and Places in which he lives, and with Courage and Resolution to decry that common Profaneness, that gains Credit only by our Silence. We know that Sin is a shameful opprobrious Thing in it self, a Thing that disheartens and dispirits the Guilty : They wear a *Conscience* about them that is still checking and upbraiding them ; and if we could but look into their Souls, we should see them covered all over with Fear, Horror, and Confusion. They are generally self-condemned Persons, and carry those Monitors within their

their own Breasts that are continually reprov- ing and tormenting them: And therefore that they may not hear the Voice of their own Consciences, they live abroad, and rather converse with any one without doors, than with themselves and their own troublesome and clamorous Hearts. Now let it be our Care to stop up all Passages, by which they think to make their escape. Let them find, that in whatsoever Company they go, they shall meet with those that will no more spare them, than their own *Consciences*; that Company is no Sanctuary for Sins and Guilt, and that they shall be as sure to be *Reproved*, as they dare to *Offend*. And when they are thus every-where beset, their *Consciences* exclaiming against them within,

within, and all that they converse with without, they will see a Necessity for it, either to forsake their *Vices*, or the *World*, and be forced to be vertuous for their own ease and quiet. And certainly till Christians do conspire together in this Design, we may long enough complain of the abounding of Iniquity without any successful Reformation. Abound it will, and grow impudent and imperious; unless we join together to beat down its Credit, expose it to Scorn and Contempt, and make that which is so really shameful in it self, to be the greatest Mark of Infamy, Shame, and Reproach to any that shall dare to commit it.

But now this Duty of *Reproving*, requires not only a great deal of Christian *Fortitude* and *Courage*, but also a great measure

sure of Christian *Prudence* and *Discretion*. We must not only be resolute and confident in doing it, but we must do it likewise in such a fitting way as may be most likely to work a good effect upon those whom we are to *reprove*. And therefore,

4.  
Rules for Re-  
proof.

In the Fourth Place, I shall give you some brief Rules and Directions, when you ought to *reprove*, and how you ought to manage your *Reproofs*, so as they may be most beneficial to your Brother. And some of them shall be *Negatives*, and others shall be *Positives*.

I. *First*, For the *Negative* Rules, take these that follow.

I.  
We must not  
reprove without  
knowledge of  
the Offence.

*First*, I ought not to reprove my Brother, if I have no certain knowledge of his Offence. And therefore those who upon a blind Rumour, or groundless Suspicion,

on, hastily conclude him guilty, and so fill their Mouths with Reproofs, shew themselves to be very much in love with this Office, and are a company of impertinent Busy-bodies, who start their Arrow before ever they see the Mark. We must first be certainly informed, either upon our Personal Knowledge, or upon the undoubted Testimonies of credible Witnesses, that he is Guilty; otherwise in going about to shew him his *Fault*, we shall but shew our own *Folly*, and Credulity, our *Reproofs* will be but *Slanders*, and our Charity in offering the Cure, will not be half so great, as our uncharitableness in believing the Disease.

*Secondly*, It is not necessary for me to reprove, where I have reason to conclude that others of more Prudence and Interest in the

2.

the Party, either have already, or else will more effectually perform it : For otherwise it will appear that we do not so much seek his *Emendation* , as to be *Ostentatious* of our own Zeal and Forwardness. And besides, too many Reprovers may, instead of reforming, rather irritate and provoke : Only here, beware thou dost not retract this ingrateful Office, upon slight Pretences, nor think thy self excused, because others are bound to do it. But consider seriously in thine own Conscience, whether thou thinkest they will be faithful enough in performing it, or more dextrous than thou art in managing it ; or that their *Reproof* will be more acceptable and more prevalent with thy Brother than thine. If not, thou art still obliged to it : And if thou refusest,

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refusest, know, that though he may die in his Sins, yet his Blood God will require at thy Hands.

3. *Thirdly,* We ought not to give *sharp Reproofs* for *small Offences*. Sharp Reproof must not be for small Offences.  
 We must not particularly, and with Accent and Emphasis reprove our Brother for every involuntary slip, every Infirmary and Weakness, that bewrayeth it self through some suddain Passion or Temptation; unless it be a Sin of Custom, or that which carries with it some signal Aggravation, that renders it considerable, as well in the *Scandal* as in the *Guilt*. It will be sufficient to pass by the rest, only with a brief Animadversion upon them, enough to put him in mind that he forgot himself in such and such Passages: And so leave the farther *Reproof* to his own Conscience, which will better

L do

do it for lesser Sins, than possibly we can. To reprove small Faults with great vehemence, is always as ridiculous, and may sometimes prove as destructive a piece of Officiousness, as his who took up a huge Beetle, and struck with all his Might, only to kill a Fly he saw sticking upon his Friends Forehead. We must not thrust the *Probe* deep where the Wound is but shallow: Nor be passionately concern'd at our Brother's lighter Failings; but so govern our selves, as still to reserve the more sharp and severe *Reproofs* for the more foul and scandalous Offences. For they that will presently upon every slender occasion fly out into Exclamations, Detestations; and all passionate Exaggerations of Rhetorick, will but lavishly spend the vigour of their Zeal,  
and

and leave themselves no Art, no Methods to express their greater abhorrence for blacker Crimes.

*Fourthly*, We are not to *Reprove* those whom we have reason to believe are such desperate Wretches, that our *Reproofs* would but exasperate them to sin the more for a *Reproof*. To these, such would be no Acts of Love and Charity, but rather a Design to destroy their Souls, and to heap more and heavy loads of Wrath and Vengeance upon their Heads. Certainly if we have any sense of God's Glory, any Tenderness and Compassion for our Brother's Soul, we ought to be ware that we do not inrage him the more, to dishonour the one, or to wound the other, by the mistaken Charity of our *Reproofs*: And therefore, St.

4.

*Reproof not  
to be given  
where it will  
exasperate.*

*Austine* speaks well (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. 1. cap. 9. ) *Si propterea corripendis male agentibus parcit, quia opportunum tempus requirit, vel iisdem ipsis metuit ne deteriores ex hoc efficiantur, videtur esse concilium Charitatis.* It is *Charity* not to reprove those, who we believe will be the worse for our *Reproofs*. Alas how many are there in the *World*, who when they are reprov'd (and that very justly) for their *Sins*, presently fall a blaspheming and cursing, railing at *Piety*, and all that profess it, violate the good *Name* of their *Reprovers*, and can hardly abstain from offering violence to their *Persons*. Now such as these are past *Reproof*, when once they turn *Reproof* it self into an *Occasion* of further sinning. The greatest exercise of *Charity* to these, is to let them alone,

alone, and not to increase their Damnation, by stirring up the virulency and rancor of their Spirits.

*Reproof* is spiritual *Physick* for the Soul. Now as it is an imprudent Course to administer such *Physick* to the Body, as will irritate, and not expel the peccant Humours: So likewise it is very imprudent and unsafe, to administer such *Reproofs* as we know cannot cure the Offender, but will only irritate his Corruption, and render it the more turbulent, and him much worse than he was before. And therefore some are themselves to be reprov'd, who with an imprudent Zeal reprove others, without ever considering what Effects their *Reproofs* are likely to produce, who, as soon as a Sin is committed, think themselves

Gal. 4. 18.

obliged in Conscience, instantly to rebuke them for it, although not only they themselves may be reviled, but the Name of God most horribly blasphemed upon this very Occasion. It is indeed *good to be zealously affected always in a good Matter.* But yet withal know, that as Zeal and Charity ought to be the Motive, so Christian Prudence ought to be the Measure of all our *Re-proofs.* And if you take not the Advice of Discretion, your Zeal for God's Glory may but occasion his Dishonour; and your Charity to the Souls of others, occasion their forer Ruine and Damnation. Certainly we are not obliged to reprove where we have reason to suspect we shall rather do hurt than good. It would be but a cruel Charity, to poison our Brother in his  
*Physick,*

*Physick*, and to kill him in his Cure. And therefore both *Solomon*, and a greater than *Solomon*, our Saviour *Christ* himself, have forbidden us to misplace *Reproofs* upon those who are desperate. *Solomon* tells us, *He* Prov. 9. 7. that *reproveth* a *Scorner*, getteth to himself *Shame*; and he that rebuketh a wicked *Man*, getteth unto himself a *Blot*. And again, *Reprove not* a *Scorner*, lest he hate thee. And says our Saviour, *Give not* that Matth. 7. 6. which is *Holy* unto *Dogs*, neither cast ye your *Pearls* before *Swine*, lest they trample them under their *Feet*, and turn again and rent you. Where it is very plain from the precedent Verses, that he dehorts us from lavishing out our *Reproofs* imprudently upon *Dogs* and *Swine*. Wicked and impure Persons, on whom we have reason to think they will have no effect, but on-

ly to inrage them, and make them fly out both against God and us, with the more Violence and Madness. To *reprove* such, is but to cast up Water against an high Wind, that will be sure to beat it back again into our own Faces.

And thus I have given you the *Negative Rules* in these four Particulars. Reprove not without a certain knowledge of the Offence. Nor where others who are likely to be more effectual, have done it already. Nor for every involuntary slip. Nor those who are like to be the worse for it.

Let us now proceed to lay down some *Positive Rules* and *Directions* for the right managing of our *Reproofs*. And here,

*First*, If thou wouldst reprove with success, observe right Circumstances of Time and Place :

I.  
Time and  
Place must  
be observed  
in giving Re-  
proof.

Place : And let the one be as opportune, and the other as private as thou canst. We ought to observe the *mollia tempora fandi*, the soft and easy Hours of speaking. And therefore the wise Man tells us, *A Word spoken in season, how good is it? It is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*, that is, very beautiful and pleasing. There are some happy Seasons wherein the most rugged Natures are accessible; and it is a great part of Prudence in all our Concerns, if we would have them prosperous, to watch such Opportunities, and to improve them.

Prov. 15. 23.

Now usually it is no fit season for Reproof, *Reproof not seasonable,*

*First*, Presently as soon as the Sin is committed; for then the heat is not over, nor the uproar of the Passions and Affections *I. As soon as the Sin is committed.*

fections appeased. In all likelihood a *Reproof* as yet would but irritate. As Water falling upon a red hot Iron, doth but cause a great deal of Noise and Disturbance: So a *Reproof* just upon the very Act of a Sin, doth but make the Sinner fume, estuate and tumultuate the more. Nor yet,

2.

*Reproof un-  
seasonable in a  
time of Mirth.*

*Secondly*, Is a Time of Mirth and Joy fit for *Reproof*; for that will look like a piece of Envy, as if we were malicious at their Prosperity, and therefore studied to cast in somewhat that might disturb them; and so they will be apt to interpret it. Nor,

3.

*Reproof un-  
seasonable in a  
time of Sorrow.*

*Thirdly*, Is a Time of exceeding great Sadness and Sorrow, a proper Season for *Reproof*; for this will look like Hostility and Hatred, as if we designed utterly to overwhelm and dispatch them. But

But the fittest opportunity for this Duty, is when they are most calm and sedate, their Passions hush'd, and their Reason (with which you are to deal) again reseat'd upon its Throne. When they are free from all inward Perturbations of Mind, and from all considerable Alterations in their outward Estate and Condition. Then, if ever, they will listen to *Reproof*, and take right Measures of the Sin for which you *reprove* them. But if we *reprove* them when their Passions are in a Tumult, and all within in an Uproar and Combustion, it is no wonder at all if either they reject or revile our *Reproofs*; for we then accuse them before very corrupt Judges, viz. their own Passions and corrupt Affections. And you may with as much Reason,

*Reproof most  
seasonable when  
Persons are  
most calm and  
sedate.*

Jonah 4. 9.

Reason, and as good Success, chide the Sea for being Tempestuous, when the Winds rage and are let loose upon it. Chide a Man for being angry when he is angry, and what will you get by it, but only some of his foam cast upon you? Let God himself expostulate with an impatient *Jonah*, whilst he is in his fit of Impatience: *Doeſt thou well to be angry?* and he will tell him snappishly to his Face, *That he doth well to be angry, even to the very Death.* There is no dealing with Men while their Passions blind their Reason; This makes them as utterly incapable of taking good Counsel, as if they were brute Beasts. Thou wert as good thrust thy Hand into a *Wasps Nest*, as come with *Reproofs* and *Rebukes* when the Swarm is up, to be sure thou shalt

shalt only go away with many a Sting and Wound, and thou mayest thank thy self for no better timing thy *Reproofs*.

Indeed in Cases of great Importance and absolute Necessity, we may run this Venture, and possibly succeed well in it. Thus *Joab* very sharply reprov'd *David*, when he so immoderately mourned for *Absalom*. And I think it is one of the roundest Checks that ever a dutiful Subject gave to his Prince; but if he had not taken that very time, the Case had been desperate, and his People had all forsaken him, and therefore the necessity of Affairs would not permit him to expect a more seasonable Address. Otherwise generally, it is more adviseable to wait a fitting and cool time. As God is said to come down *in the cool*

<sup>2</sup> Sam. 19.

5, 6, 7.

*cool of the Day* to reprove *Adam*. So likewise should we come in the cool season of a Man's Passions, when all is quiet and temperate within, for then is there the greatest probability of Success.

2.

*Reproof must be  
with Gentleness  
and Meekness.*

*Secondly*, If thou wouldst have thy Reproofs successful, reprove with all Gentleness and Meekness, without giving any railing or reviling Terms. He that mingles Reproach with *Reproof*, engages a Man's Reputation to side with his Vices: For whilst we shew any Bitterness in our *Reproofs*, and give them in vilifying and ignominious Language, the Vehicle will hinder the Operation of the Physick. For they will look like the upbraidings of an Enemy; and it is a thing most abhorrent unto Nature, to follow the Counsels  
and

and Advice of an Enemy. And therefore the *Apostle* chargeth us, Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in Gal. 6. 1. a fault, you that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of Meekness, considering thy self, lest thou be also tempted. Which last Clause intimates to us, that we ought to deal as tenderly with a fallen Brother, as we would desire to be dealt with our selves, were we in the same condition. For having the same corrupt Nature, and being subject to the like Temptations, we may likewise, through God's dereliction of us, fall into the same Miscarriages. Now wouldst thou take it well, if any should revile and reprove thee, condemn thee for a rotten Hypocrite, as *Job's* Friends did him; or draw hideous black Consequences from every failing and weakness of thine? Certainly

ly thou wouldst not interpret this to be friendly and candid dealing: No more do thou with others. It is a true Saying, That he who would know his own Faults, had need have either a faithful Friend, or a bitter Enemy; they will both be sure to do it to the full. But then the difference is, that an Enemy's *Reproofs* are usually joined with *Reproaches*, and when we are fallen, he will stand and insult over us. But a true Christian Friend will faithfully represent our condition to us, pity us in it, and endeavour to help and raise us out of it. And such should we be to all, not railing on them for Hypocrites, or lost and desperate Apostates; for this certainly is not the way to reduce them, but rather to confirm and harden them in their Sins. We should

should not gripe nor press their Wounds, but rather gently anoint and chafe them. Our *Reproofs* should be as Oyl, smooth and lenitive, to soak into and supple the Part affected. And therefore the *Apostle* again exhorts us, *in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves.* 2 Tim. 2. 25. But whilst we exclaim against them with bitter *Invectives*, and dip all our *Reproofs* in Gall and *Satyr*, we may quickly make them loath the Medicine rather than the Disease, and sooner break their Heads with such Rebukes, than their Hearts for their Offences.

*Thirdly*, Though our *Reproofs* must be meek and gentle, 3: Reproof must be quick and vivacious. yet must they be quick and *vivacious* also. For as *Charity* requires the one, so doth *Zeal* the other: And the best and most equal Temper, is rightly

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James I. 20.

to mix these two, that at once we may shew Meekness to his Person, (*for the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*) and Sharpness against his Sin, (for a remiss Reprover will but make a slow Penitent.) We ought so to reprove, that he may not think we only jest and dally with him, and for this it is necessary that we do it with all Seriousness, Gravity and Authority, not playing about the Wound, but searching into the very depth and bottom of it. And therefore we must use such words as are most significant of our meaning, most expressive of our Grief and Sorrow for him, and which we think most apt to expose the *Vice* that we *reprove*, and make it most odious and hateful, keeping still within the bounds of

of a sober and friendly Redargution. Hence the *Apostle* gives *Titus* this Advice, *Rebuke them* Tit. 1. 13. *sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith.* If they want Salt and Vinegar, spare them not. This possibly may cleanse those Wounds that else would fester and putrify. But here is required much spiritual Prudence to know how to suit *Reproof*, according to the different Conditions and Tempers of the Persons you deal with. Some must be launcht and searcht to the very Quick before they can be healed. Others require a gentle Hand. If they be proud and stubborn, they need Corrosives. But for those who are naturally meek and mild, a meek and mild Course will be easiest and most effectual. The Tempers and Cases of particular Christians

are so various, that there can be no Rules given that may be applicable to every Condition. This must of necessity be left to your Prudence and Discretion. Only this Rule is infallible, Be sure you flatter none in their Vices, extenuate not their Sins; when thou com'st to reprove them, do it not in sport: Let them see thou art in very good earnest, and tell them their Sin, as it is in it self, without mincing the matter, or the circumstances of it. For Men are always apt to impute somewhat of the *Reproof* to the severity of him that gives it, rather than to the demerits of their own Offences. And therefore, if thou thy self shalt speak but slightly of their Sins, they will be ready to conclude that they were none, or at least so small, that it was  
nothing

nothing but Officiousness, and the love of Censuring made thee take notice of them.

*Fourthly*, Let all thy *Reproofs* <sup>*Reproof ought to be given privately.*</sup> be given as secretly and privately as possibly thou canst; otherwise thou wilt seem not so much to aim at thy Brother's Reformation, as at his Shame and Confusion. For if (as the Wiseman tells us) a loud and clamorous <sup>Prov. 27. 14.</sup> Benediction given too officiously, is so far from being a Blessing, that it is but a Curse and a Shame to a Man's Friend. Certainly then a publick clamorous *Reproof* must only tend to the Shame and Reproach of them that receive it. Indeed there are some who offend openly before many: These, (if there be no fear of irritating them to do worse) we ought openly to rebuke, and to give them their

Reproof in the Company where they have given the Offence, so saith the Apostle, *Those that Sin rebuke before all*; that is, supposing that their Sins be open and publick. But for others whose Sins and Miscarriages have been private, and only known to our selves and a few others, we ought to reprove them in secret, and to be tender not only of their Souls, but of their Reputation also. So is the Counsel of our Saviour, *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone.* And indeed this is a necessary piece of Prudence, not only to preserve his Reputation and good Name as much as maybe, but also,

I. *First,* To preserve the Reputation of Religion it self, which a more publick divulging of his Offences might much impair and discredit. And *Second,*

To preserve the Reputation of Religion.

*Secondly,* To hinder the spreading of an evil Example, which also perhaps some or other would make use of, to encourage them in the like Transgressions. And,

2.

*To hinder the spreading of an evil Example.*

*Thirdly,* To preserve him serviceable for the future; for by reporting his Miscarriages, thou lessenest his Credit, and thereby rendrest him less capable of doing good than he was before. For though he may recover himself out of the Snare of the Devil, and his Wound be healed, yet if his Faults have been made publick, the Scar will still remain: And this will be such a blemish to him, that having lost much of his reputation among Men, he will likewise lose much of those Advantages he formerly had of doing good in the World; and thou by thy *imprudent Reproofs* be the cause of it. Upon all

3.

*That they may be serviceable*

these Accounts it is necessary that thy *Reproofs* be managed with the greatest Secrecy and Privacy that may be: For as St. *Austin* speaks well, “ If whilst thou  
 “ alone knowest thy Brother to  
 “ have offended, and yet wilt  
 “ rebuke him before all, *Non es*  
 “ *corrector, sed proditor* : Thou  
 “ art not a Reprover, but a  
 “ Betrayer.

5.

*Superiours must  
 be reprov'd re-  
 spectfully.*

*Fifthly*, Reprove not one who is greatly thy Superiour, unless it be at a respectful distance.

Towards such, we must not use down-right and blunt *Rebukes*; but rather insinuate things into them with Address and Artifice.

Job 34. 18.

What says *Elibu*, *Is it fit to say to a King, Thou art wicked, and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* And indeed in this Case usually, it is most fit and decent that thy *Reproofs* should not carry their own Shape

Shape and Form, but disguise them rather into Parables or Intreaties, or into any such humble and becoming Method: Yet withal, let so much appear, as that they may well enough know thy drift and intent. For it becomes the Wisdom and Station of Inferiours, so to order their Speech, that if it can but be interpreted as a *Reproof*, their Superiours may and will certainly know they meant it for such. Thus the *Apostle* bids us, *Rebuke* 1 Tim. 5. 1. *not an Elder, but rather intreat him as a Father.* For because their Place and Calling required Respect and Reverence, therefore the *Apostle* would not have them bluntly Rebuked, but that the *Reproof* should be clad in another dress, that they might appear to be rather Intreaties than Rebukes.

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We may observe likewise, that when *Nathan* was sent immediately by God to reprove King *David*, he doth not attack him directly, and fall rudely upon him for his Adultery and Murder, but cloaths his Speech in a Parable, and when he had so represented the heinousness of his Sin, so as by that means to make him first reprove and condemn himself, then he tells him, *Thou art the Man*.

6. *Sixthly*, If thou wouldst have thy *Reproofs* effectual, especially beware that thou thy self art not guilty of those Sins which thou reprovest in another. It were indeed a Temper to be wish'd and pray'd for, that we could only respect how righteous the *Reproof* were, and not how righteous the Person is who gives it. For there is no more

*We must not be  
guilty of the  
Sins we reprove  
others for.*

more reason to reject sound Admonition, because it comes from an unsound Heart, than there is to stop our Ears against good Counsel because it is delivered perhaps by an unfavoury Breath. Yet so it is, that when Men of defiled Consciences and Conversations reprove others, they are apt to justifie themselves by recriminating, or else to think they do but sport and jest with them : Or thirdly to hate them for gross Hypocrites and Dissemblers ; or lastly, to think they do but envy them their Sins, and that they would ingross all to themselves. It was a true Observation of *Pliny* in his *Epistles*, Lib. 8. Epist. 22. That there are some, *Qui sic aliorum vitis irascuntur, quasi invidiant* : Who are so angry at other Mens Vices, as if they  
envied

envied them. It cannot be hoped that the *Reproof* of such should ever take place. But when a Man of a clear and unspotted Name shall *reprove* the Sins and Vices of others, his *Rebukes* carry Authority with them, and if they cannot reform; yet at least must they needs daunt and silence the Offenders, that they shall have nothing to reply, no Subterfuges nor Evasions, but they must needs be convinced that their Sins are as evil, as he represents them by his own Care and Caution to be avoided.

5. *Fifthly*, The only Thing that remains is to propound to you some *Motives* that may quicken you to the conscientious discharge of this much neglected Duty. And I shall but name some few, and leave them to your

*Motives for re-  
proving our  
Brother.*

your consideration to be farther prest upon you. And here next to the expresse Command of Almighty God, whose Authority alone ought to prevail against all the Difficulties that we either find or fancy in the way of Obedience thereunto :

Consider, *First*, the great benefit that may redound both to the *Reprover*, and *Reproved*. Benefit of re-proving others.

*First*, Thou shalt hereby provide thy self a Friend that may take the same liberty to *reprove* thee, when it shall be needful, and for thy great good. And it may very well be thought that the *Apostle* upon this Account requires us to *Restore our fallen* Gal. 6. 1. *Brother, with meek Reproofs, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted* : That is, that hereby we may purchase a true Friend, who will be as faithful to us, as we

we have been to him. However, certainly it is the best and most generous way of procuring to our selves true Love and Respect from those whom we have thus reformed. So says Solo-

Prov. 9. 8.

*mon, Rebuke a wise Man, and he will love thee.* And in another

Prov. 28. 23.

*place, says he, He that rebuketh a Man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his Tongue.*

*Secondly, Thou wilt hereby intitle thy self to that great and precious Promise, That they that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever. And to that other of the wise Man, To them that rebuke the Wicked, shall be Delight, and a good Blessing shall come upon them.*

Prov. 24. 25.

*Thirdly, Thou shalt increase thy own Graces and Comforts more*

more than possibly thou couldst do by separating thy self from them. Thy Graces will be more confirmed, because *reproving* of others will engage thee to a greater Watchfulness over thy self. Thy Comforts also will be encreased, because a conscientious discharge of this Duty, will be to thee a great Evidence of the Integrity and sincerity of thy Heart.

*First*, The practice of this Duty will be greatly profitable unto him that is reprov'd. How knowest thou but it may be a means to turn him from his Iniquity, and so thou shalt prevent a Multitude of Sins, and save a Jam. 5. 20. Soul from Death. And hereby likewise we shall frustrate one of the great Designs and Artifices of the Devil, which is, to allure Men to Sin by the Examples

ples of those Wickednesses that pass uncheck'd and uncontroul'd in the World.

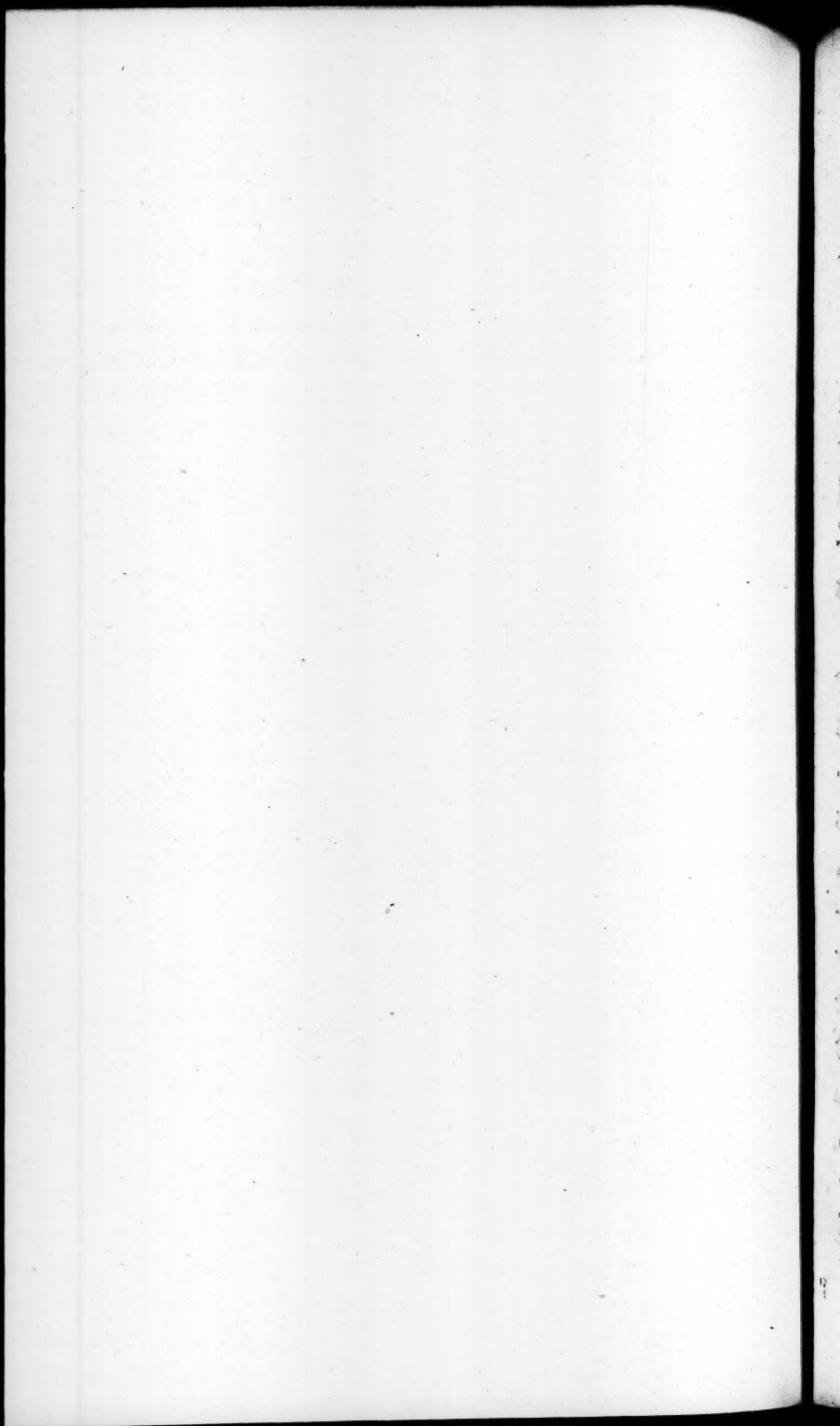
Tit. 3. 3.

*Secondly*, Consider that we our selves also were disobedient and foolish, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures; but were wrought upon either by publick or private Reproof. And why then should not we use the same Charity towards others, which God hath been pleased to make effectual towards us.

1 Joh. 3. 15.

*Thirdly*, Consider that the Text makes it an apparent sign of hating our Brother, if we forbear justly to reprove him. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: thou shalt in any wise reprove him.* So that he who reproveth not his Brother, hates him. Now *he that hates his Brother is a Murderer, says St. John. And no Murderer hath Eternal Life.*  
Yea,

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Yea, we are guilty of *Soul-Murder*, which is so much the more heinous, by how much the Soul is more precious than the Body.

*Fourthly*, Consider that the performance of this Duty, were it more universal, would be the aptest and readiest means to prevent *Schism* and *Division*. The grand pretence for Separation, is the wickedness of many who are *Church-Members*. Now our *Saviour's* Method is, That such should be first reprov'd and admonish'd, before they be cast out; but it is a most preposterous and headlong Course that thousands in our Days take, who cast themselves out of the Communion of the *Church*, for the Sins of those who deserve to be cast out; and rather than they will perform this ingrateful Work of *Reproof*, choose to se-

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parate;

Mat. 18. 15,  
16.

parate ; whereas if they would make use of our *Saviour Christ's* Advice, to reprove privately, and in case of Obstinacy, to convict publickly, there would be, as no need, so no Pretence left for Separation ; but either their private Reproofs would prevail to reform, or their publick Complaints and Accusations to remove Offenders.

Eph. 5. 11.

*Fifthly*, Consider, that the neglect of this Duty, brings the Sin and Guilt of others upon your own Souls. See for this that Scripture, *Ephesians 5. 11. Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes, but rather reprove them.* If we reprove them not, we are Partakers of their evil Deeds, and deserve to be Partakers of their Torments.

THE

T H E  
D R E A D F U L N E S S  
O F

God's Wrath, Explain'd.

HEB. X. 30, 31.

*For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord shall judge his People.*

*It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.*

**T**Here are two principal *At-tributes* of God, which *the Scripture* propounds to us as the most powerful and efficacious Motives to restrain us from

*An Introduction.*

N 2

Sin;

Rom. 2. 4.

Sin : And they are his *Mercy*, and his *Justice*; *Mercy* tho' it be a soft, yet is it a strong Argument to encourage us to Purity and Holiness. And therefore says the Apostle, *The Goodness of God leadeth us to Repentance*. And certainly that *Mercy* that expresseth it self so ready to pardon Sin, cannot but lay a mighty Obligation upon the Ingenuity of a Christian Spirit to abstain from the commission of it. He that can encourage himself in Wickedness, upon the consideration of the infinite Free-Grace of God, doth but spurn those very Bowels that yern towards him, and strike at God with his own Golden Scepter, yea he tears abroad those Wounds which were at first opened for him, and casts the Blood of his Saviour back again in his Face. But because Ingenuity

nuity is perisht from off the Earth, and Men are generally more apt to be wrought upon by Arguments drawn from Fear than Love, therefore the *Scripture* propounds to us the consideration of the dreadful Justice of God arrayed in all the terrible Circumstances of it, that if Mercy cannot allure us, Justice at least might affright us from our Sins. And as those who are to travel thorow *Wildernesses* and *Deserts*, carry Fire with them to terrifie wild and ravenous Beasts, and to secure themselves from their Assaults : So doth the great God, who hath to deal with brutish Men, Men more savage than wild Beasts, he kindles a Fire about him, and appears to them all in Flames and Fury ; that so he might fright them from their bold Attempts, who other-

Job 15. 26.

wise would be ready, *to run upon his Neck and the thick Bosses of his Buckler.*

And therefore in the Four precedent Verses, we find the *Apostle* threatening most tremendous Judgments against all that should wilfully transgress, after they had received the knowledge of the Truth. He tells us, *there remains no more sacrifice for their Sins*: Nothing to expiate their Guilt, but that they themselves must fall a Burnt-Sacrifice to the offended Justice of God, consumed with that fiery Indignation that shall certainly seize and prey upon them for ever. And in v. 28, 29. he sets forth the exceeding Dreadfulness of their Judgment, by a comparison between those that violated the *Law of Moses*, and those that *renounce and annul the Law of Christ*. He

that

*that despised Moses's Law*, who himself was but a Servant, and his Laws consisted of inferiour and less spiritual Ordinances, yet a Despiser and Transgressor of these was *to die without Mercy*; certainly much sorer Judgments await those, who reject the *Laws of Christ*, and trample him who is the *Son and Lord* of the House, under foot; accounting his Blood unholy and prophane, renouncing his Merits, and blaspheming the Holy Spirit by which our *Saviour* acted: Such as these, shall eternally perish with less Mercy, than those that *died without Mercy*. Where observe the strange *Emphasis* that the *Apostle* lays upon this dreadful Commination; he tells us they shall be sorer punish'd, than those that are punished without Mercy; to let us know, that

as. there are transcendent Glories, such as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive*, reserved in the Heavens for those that love God; so are there Woes and Torments, such as *Eye hath not seen, Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive*, how great and insupportable they are, prepared in *Hell* for those that hate him. They shall die with less Mercy, than those that die without Mercy.

Now that we might not wonder at such a *Paradox* as this, the *Apostle* gives the Reason of it in my Text, *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me*, it is the Vengeance of God, and a falling into the Hands of God, and therefore it is no wonder if their Punishments be beyond all extremity. They fall under

under the Power and Wrath of an infinite God, which when we have heaped Superlatives upon Superlatives, yet still we must expresse defectively, and all that we can conceive of it falls vastly short of reaching but a faint and languishing resemblance thereof. It is a State so full of perfect Misery, that Misery it self is too easy a Name to give it ; yea, whatsoever we can speak most appositely of it, is but diminishing it ; for because it is the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of an infinite God, it can no more be known by us, than God himself. Plunge your Thoughts as deep into it as you can, yet still there remains an infinite *Abyssse* which you can never fathom. And O that the consideration of this *Wrath* might cause us to tremble before this great and terrible God, that  
we

we Might so fear it, as never to feel it; and be perswaded to fall down at his Feet, that we may never fall into his Hands. And that we may be thus affected, I have chosen this *Text* to set forth the Greatness and Dreadfulness of that Wrath and Vengeance which the righteous God will execute upon all stubborn and disobedient Wretches.

A *Text* that speaks to us, as God did to the *Israelites* from *Mount Sinai*, out of the midst of the Fire and Blackness, Darkness and Tempest, in the Voice of a Trumpet. And truly we have all need to have such rousing Truths frequently inculcated upon us, for the best of us are *Lethargical*, and though sometime when our Consciences are pincht hard by a severe and searching Truth, we start and look abroad, yet as soon as the present Impression

Impression is over, we close our Eyes, and fall asleep again in Sin and Security. There is a strange Dullness and Stupor hath seiz'd us, that we can no longer keep waking than we are shook.

And therefore as we use to apply Fire and burning Coals to *Lethargick* Persons to awaken them; so we have need to heap *Coals of Fire* upon Mens Heads, to speak with *fiery Tongues*, and thunder Woe and Wrath and Judgments against them, that we may rouse the secure stupid World, and scorch them into Life and Sense.

In the Words we have these two Parts observable.

*First*, An Appropriation of Vengeance unto God, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.*

*Secondly*, The Dreadfulness  
of

of that Vengeance inferred, from the consideration of the Author and Inflicter of it; *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

I begin with the *first* of these; God's appropriating and challenging Vengeance unto himself. *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.* Which Passage the Apostle cites out of Deuteronomy, *To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, and the Lord shall judge his People.* It is his great and royal Prerogative that he doth sometimes make use of in inflicting Judgments upon the Wicked in this World, but most especially in the World to come. And to this future Vengeance, the Words ought particularly to be applied. Now from this consideration, That Vengeance in a peculiar Manner belongs

longs unto the great God, we may observe,

*That God himself will be the immediate Inflicter of the Punishments of the Damned.*

It is therefore here called a *falling into the Hands of the living God*, which denotes his immediate Efficiency in their Torments.

It is true, God doth use several Instruments of Torture in Hell. There is the *Worm that never dies*, and the *Fire that never goes out*, which I suppose to be not only a *Metaphorical*, but possibly a *Material Fire*, elevated to such a degree of Subtilty, as that it shall at once torture the Soul, and not consume the Body. And this Fire the *Devils*, who are their Executioners, will be officiously raking about them, using all their malicious Art to  
increase

increase their eternal Misery. But these things are but small Appendages, and the slighter Circumstances of their Torments; the most exact and intolerable part of their Torture shall be inflicted on them from another *Fire*, an intelligent Everlasting, and therefore an unquenchable Fire, even God himself, for so he is said to be, *Our*

Heb. 12. 29.

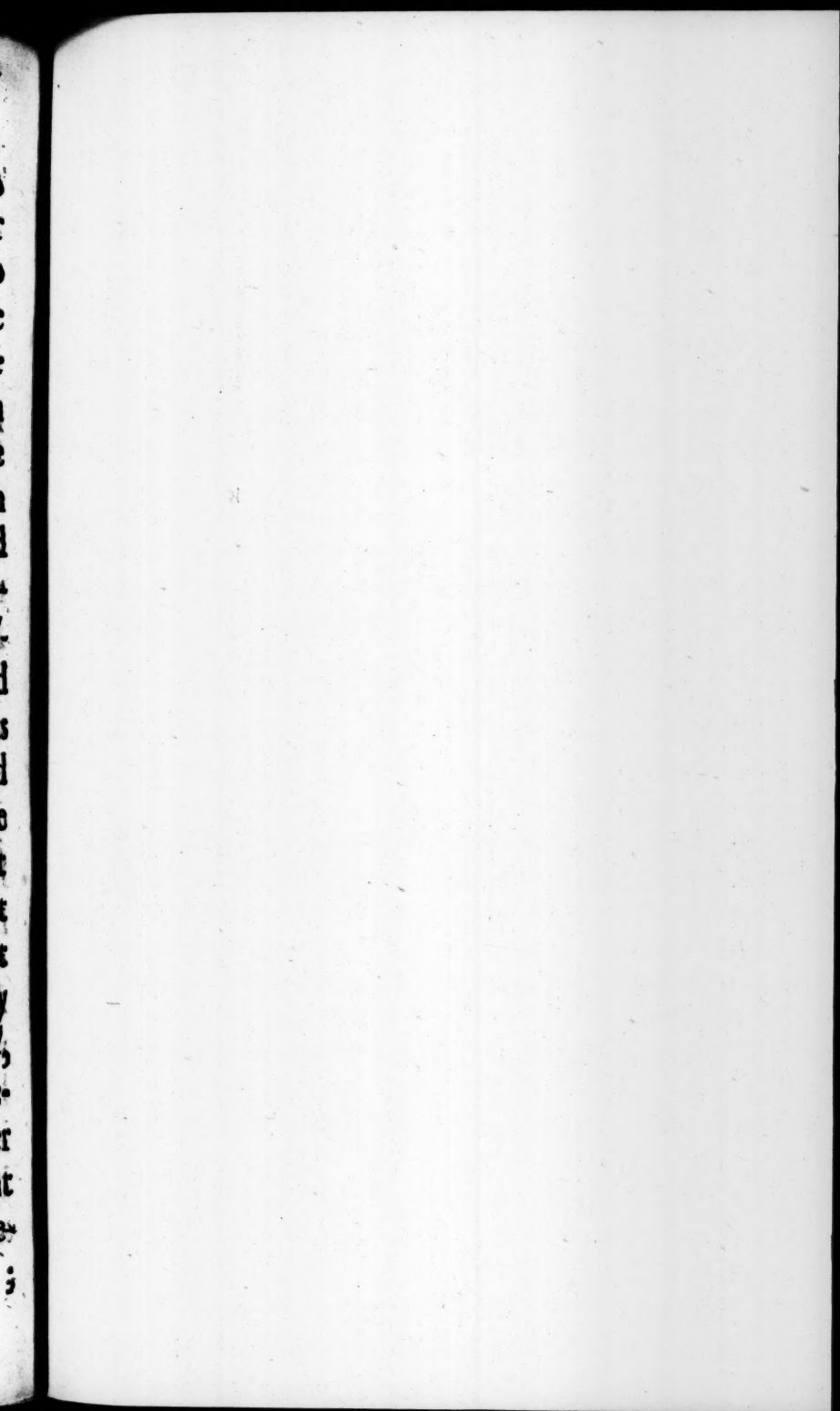
*God is a consuming Fire.*

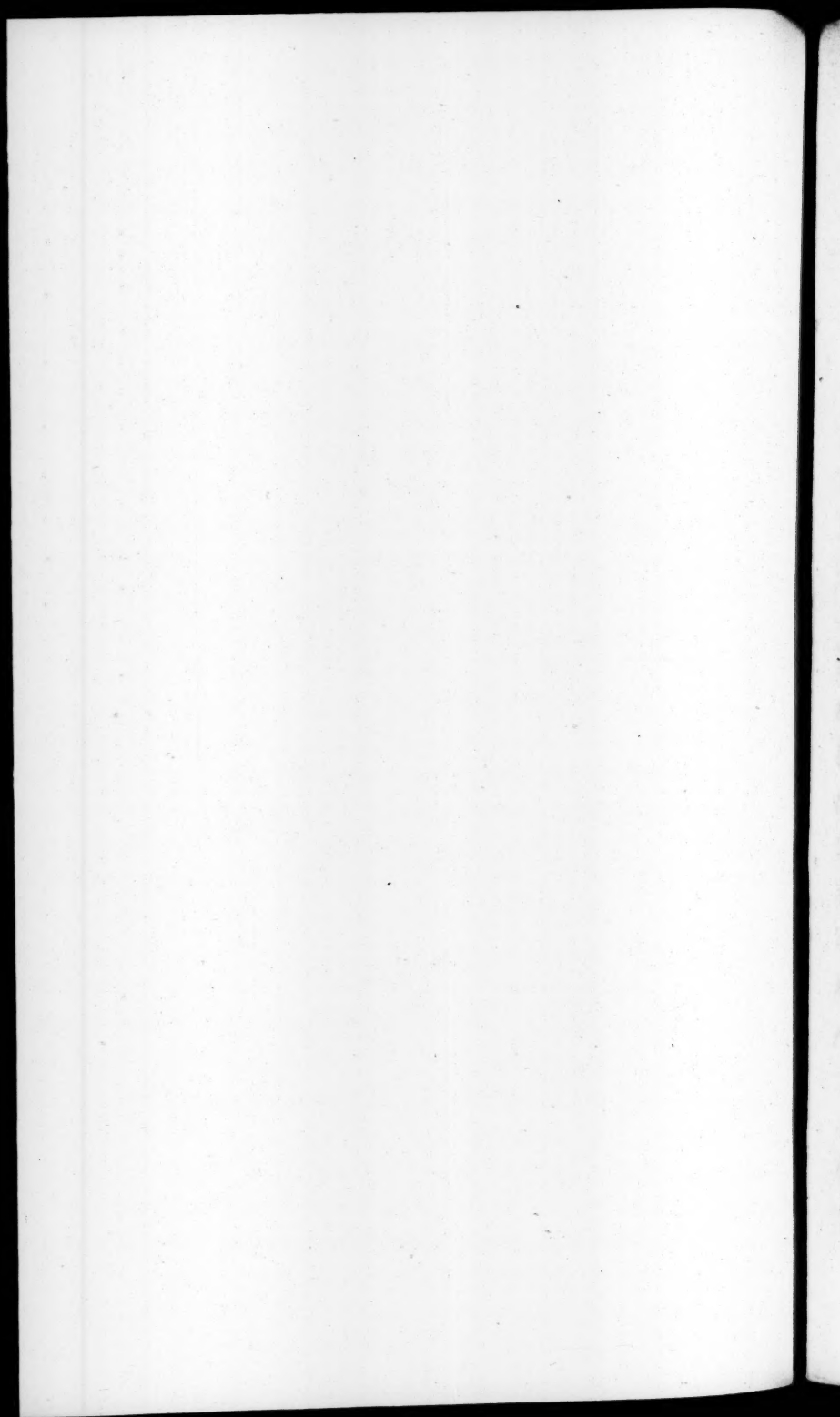
Isa. 33. 14.

And though we ordinarily speak only of *Hell Fire*, yet not only *Hell*, but *Heaven* is full of this *Fire*, consult that place, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring Fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? Would not one think at the first sound of the Words, that the Prophet speaks only of such as should be damned in Hell, remaining there in everlasting Burnings?*

nings ? And demands of them, who among them could endure this ? No, but it appears plainly, that this *Fire* and *Burning* is in Heaven it self, and the *Prophet* by putting this *Question*, *Who shall dwell with the devouring Fire and everlasting Burnings ?* asks who shall be saved, and not who shall be destroyed ? And therefore in the 15th. *Verse*, he tells us, that he shall do it, *who walketh uprightly, and speaketh uprightly, that despiseth the gain of Oppression, that shaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, that stoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and shutteth his Eyes from seeing of Evil.* Such a one shall dwell with the devouring Fire ; that is, he shall for ever dwell with God in Heaven. So that we see God is a *Fire* both to the Wicked, and to the Godly ; to the Wicked

ked he is a *penetrating torturing Fire*, and they are combustible Matter for his Wrath and Vengeance to prey upon ; but to the Godly he is a *purifying and cherishing Fire* only. And as *Lightning* doth not only cleanse and refine the *Air*, but *rends Trees* and *Rocks* in pieces ; dissolves *Metals*, and breaks thorow whatsoever opposeth it : So this great and *Almighty Fire* only refresheth and comforteth the Godly, whereas it breaks and tears the Wicked in pieces, and melts them like Wax before the scorching Heat of it. And though I deny not but there may be somewhat like that which we commonly apprehend when we speak of *Hell*, some unquenchable Flames prepared by the Wisdom and Power of God for the eternal Torment of those that shall be cast there-  
into ;





into ; yet withal I think that their most exquisite Torments shall be from that *Fire* that is God himself.

For if we observe, it is said to be *everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. NOW Matth. 25. 41. the Devils are spiritual Substances, and flames of *Fire* themselves.

*He maketh his Angels Spirits, and* Psalms 104. 4. *his Ministers,* that is his Ministring Spirits, whether good or evil, whether Ministers of his Wrath, or Ministers of his Mercy, *He makes them Flames of Fire*. They are such piercing and subtile Flames, that *Lightning* it self is but gross and dull, compared to them: Yet here is a *Fire* that shall even torture *Fire* it self, a *Fire* that shall burn those Flames of *Fire*; and that is God, who being a Spirit, and the God of Spirits, can easily pierce into the  
O very

very Centre of their Being. So that the Damned in *Hell* shall for ever find themselves burnt with a *double Fire*, a *Material Fire*, suted and adapted to impress Pain and Torment upon the Body, yet without wasting and consuming it; And an *invisible intellectual Fire*, that shall prey upon the Soul, and fill it with unspeakable Anguish and Horror, and this is no other than God himself.

And in this there is a true Parallel between *Heaven* and *Hell*; for as in *Heaven*, though there are many created Excellencies and Glories, which contribute to the *Beatitude* of the Saints; yet their most substantial Happiness is from their immediate fruition of God: So likewise in *Hell*, though there be many created and invented *Tortures*, yet

yet the most intolerable Misery of the Damned, is from the immediate infliction and infusion of the Divine Wrath into them, which no Creature can convey to them in such a Manner and Measure as they there feel it ; but God himself pours the full Vials of it into their Souls. And therefore as the Saints are called *Vessels of Mercy*, Rom. 9. 22. so the Wicked are called *Vessels of Wrath, fitted for Destruction*. Such Vessels into which God will pour in of his Vengeance, and fill brimm full with his wrath and fury for ever.

The Apostle speaking of wicked Men, tells us, *They shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Where we must not think that this Phrase [*From the Presence of the Lord*] denotes only

that part of their Punishment which we call *pœna Damni*, or the Punishment of Loss; but rather that it denotes the efficient Cause of their *pœna Sensus*, or the punishment of Sense; not that their punishment shall only be, to be for ever banished from his Presence, but that this Presence shall be active in inflicting Punishments upon them, and we may read it thus, *They shall be punished with everlasting Destruction, by the Presence of the Lord, and by the Glory of his Power*: For as God's glorious Power is effective of their Destruction, so also is his dread Presence of that consuming and tormenting Fire.

And thus much briefly for the first Thing observable in the Text, namely God's appropriating Vengeance unto himself, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, and*  
it

it is a *falling into the Hands of the Living God.*

I come now to the *second* 2.  
Thing observable in the Words, the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance inferred, from the conſideration of the Author and Inſlicter of it ; for becauſe it is Divine Vengeance , and a falling into the Hands of the Living God, therefore it muſt needs be verry terrible. And here I ſhall *firſt* take notice of thoſe Exprefſions that my *Text* affords, to ſet forth the Terrour of this Wrath. And then conſider other Demonſtrations of it. And here,

*Firſt,* Conſider that all other 1.  
Vengeance is as nothing in compariſon of that which God takes on a damned Soul. You may poſſibly have heard of ſtrange and horrid Revenges that ſome  
O 3                      cruel

2 Sam. 12.  
last.

cruel Men have carved out unto themselves, putting those that have offended them to such Tortures as were unfit for Men either to inflict or suffer. *Histories* abound with such *Barbarities*, I am loth to offend your Ears so much as to recount them, let us only take an estimate by the dreadful Revenge that *David* took on the *Ammonites*: He put them under Saws, and Harrows of Iron, and made them pass through the Brick-Kilns. And all this Severity, (if not to say Cruelty) was to revenge the insolent Affront done to his *Embassadours*. It is doubtless no small Torture to be burnt alive, for Fire is a searching Thing, and eats deep into the Senses; but yet this kind of Death was a merciful dispatch in comparison of the others: Think what it is to be stretcht along;  
to

to have the sharp spikes of an Harrow tear up your Flesh, and draw out your Bowels and Bones after them : Or what it is to be sawn asunder , and to have those small Teeth eat their way slowly thorow you, while they jarr against your Bones, and pull out your Nerves and Sinews thread by thread. How many Deaths, think you, were these miserable Creatures compelled to suffer before they were permitted to die. Yet these , and all the witty Tortures that ever were invented by the greatest Masters of Cruelty, are nothing in Comparison of the Vengeance that God will take upon Sinners in Hell : And therefore he says, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence.* As if he should say, Alas, all that you can do one to another signifies nothing, it is not to be

accounted *Vengeance*, that is too great a Name for such poor Effects. It is a Prerogative that God challengeth to himself to be the *Avenger* : And whatever Creatures meddle with, if they have not a Commission from him, it is their Sin ; and therefore private Persons, whom he hath not invested with such Authority, ought not to take upon them to avenge their own Cause. Or if they have a Commission, yet all their execution of *Vengeance* is but feeble and weak. We find in *Ecclesiastical History* that the *Holy Martyrs* have often mock'd at all the cruel *Tortures* of their enraged *Persecutors* , and God hath either taken from them all sense of Pain, or else given them in such strong Consolations, that they have triumph'd in all the Extremity of them ; O how have

have they hugg'd the *Stake* at which they were to be burnt, courted the *Beasts* that were to devour them, and been stretched upon the *Rack* with as much content, as they have stretch'd themselves upon their Beds; and not so much suffered, as enjoyed their Deaths! God hath so mercifully taken off the Edge and Keeness of their *Torments*, to shew that *Vengeance* is his Right, and that they are but contemptible things that one Man can inflict upon another, scarce worthy to be called *Vengeance*. And besides, let it be never so sharp and cutting, yet it cannot be long durable; the more intolerable any *Torments* are, the sooner they work our escape from them. And though Malice may wish the Perpetuity of our Pain, yet it is not possible for mortal Men  
to

to prosecute an immortal Revenge, the Death, either of them, or our selves, will put a period to our Sufferings. And what a small matter is it to undergo pain for a few days only, this is not worthy to be called *Vengeance*, nor is it like that which the great God will inflict, which is both insupportable and eternal. And therefore,

*Secondly*, The Apostle calls it *a falling into the hands of the Living God*. And this denotes to us the Perpetuity and Eternity of this *Vengeance*. God ever lives to inflict it, and Sinners shall ever live to suffer it; for they fall into his Hands. God hath leased out a Life to every wicked Man, he hath his Term of Years set him, wherein he lives to himself, enjoying his Lusts, and the Pleasures and Profits of this present

present World ; and all this while *Vengeance* intermeddles little with him : but when his Life is expir'd, and his Years run out, he then falls into the Hands of the great Lord of all, and becomes the Possession of his *Vengeance* and *Justice* for ever. And then, *he is the Living God*, and such wicked Wretches must for ever live to endure the most dreadful execution of his Power and Wrath. Were there any Term or Period set to their *Torments* , should they when they have endured them thousands of thousands of Years, afterwards be annihilated , the expectation of this Release would give them some support ; yea, it would be some solace to them in their Sufferings to think that at last they should be freed from them : But this is the *Accent* of their Misery, and

and that which makes them altogether desperate, that it is for ever ; for ever they must lie and wallow in those Flames that shall never be quenched, and shall always be bit and stung with that *Worm that shall never die*, they are fallen into the *Hands of the living God*, who will never let them go as long as he lives, that is, never to all Eternity. He is a consuming *Fire*, but yet spends not any part of his *Fuel*, he consumes without diminishing them, and destroys, but still perpetuates their being. A wise and intelligent *Fire*, (as *Minutius* calls him) that devours the Damned, but still repairs them, and by tormenting still nourishes them for future Torments. *Sapiens ille ignis, urit & reficit, carpit & nutrit.* And when they have lain burning in this  
Fire

*Fire* all Ages that *Arithmetick* can  
summ up, Millions of Thousands,  
and Thousands of Millions, yet  
still it is but the beginning of  
their Sorrows. O think with  
your selves how long and tedious  
a little time seems, when you  
are in pain, you complain then  
that Time hath leaden Feet, and  
wish the Days and Hours would  
roll away faster, and you never  
find them so slow-paced, as when  
they pass over a *sick Bed*. Oh  
then what will it be when you  
shalt lie sweltring under the  
*Wrath and Vengeance of the living*  
*God*, the intolerableness of your  
Pain and Torment will make e-  
very Day seem an Age; and eve-  
ry Year as long as Eternity, and  
yet you must lie there an Eternity  
of those long Years. Methinks  
this consideration of *Eternal Tor-*  
*ments* should astonish the Heart,  
and

and sink the Spirits of wicked Wretches; for though they were not to be so excessively sharp as they are, yet the *Eternity* of them should make them altogether intolerable. There is no pain so small but it would make us desperate, were we assured it would never wear off, that we should never obtain any ease or freedom from it. Whatever Pain we suffer, our encouragement unto Patience is, that shortly it will be over: But now in *Hell* there is no period fixt to their *Torments*, they are all eternal, and therefore whatsoever they are for the Measure of them, yet are they utterly intolerable for their Duration and Continuance. Couldst thou shove away Millions of Years with a Wish, yet all this would avail nothing; for there are as many Years in *Eternity* as there  
there

there are Moments, and as many Millions of Years as there are Years ; that is, it is an infinite boundless Duration, and when thou hast struck thy Thoughts as deep into it as thou canst, yet thou art but at the top of the Heap, and it is still a whole Eternity to the bottom.

*Thirdly*, Consider also that the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God is most dreadful, not only from the Eternal Duration thereof; but also from the excessive Anguish and Smart of those *Torments* that he inflicts; nothing that we have felt, or can feel in this present Life, can come into any comparison with them; and therefore the *Text* calls it, *A falling into the Hands of God*. Here on Earth God's Hand doth sometimes fall upon us, and it falls very heavy too; and lays upon  
us

us sore and weighty Burthens ; but these are nothing to our falling into the Hands of God. There is as much difference between his Wrath and Displeasure falling upon us , and our falling upon it , as there is between our having a few drops of a Showre falling upon us , and our falling into a River, or into the Sea, and being overwhelmed with the great Waters thereof ; and yet how dreadful is it when God's Hand only falls upon us ! It was a sad Complaint of the Psalmist, *That God's Hand lay heavy upon him. And That God's Hand prest him sore.* Grievous Burthens and sore Pressures may be laid upon us by this Hand of God, and that both as to outward Afflictions , and inward Troubles.

Psal. 32. 4.

Psal. 38. 2.

*First,*

*First,* As to outward Afflictions. How dreadfully doth God stretch out his Hand against some, making wide and terrible Breaches upon them ; Some in their Estates, some in their Relations, and some in their bodily Health and Strength. Have you never been about the sick Beds of those that have roared through extremity of Pain, every Limb being upon the Rack, and God filling them with a Complication of loathsome, tormenting and incurable Diseases ? and yet all this is but only a falling of God's Hand upon them.

*Secondly,* As to inward Troubles : We see how God cramps some Mens Consciences, breathes Fire and Flames into their very Souls, and makes deep Wounds in their Spirits, forcing them thorough the extremity of Anguish

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to

Psal. 88. 15.

to cry out, *they are damn'd, they are damn'd*; yea some have even wisht that they were in Hell, supposing those everlasting Torments would not be more unsufferable than what they here felt. And indeed these inward Troubles are far more grievous than any outward can be. We hear *Heman* crying out, that *because of these Terrours of the Lord, he was ready to die from his Youth up. And whilst he suffered this Wrath of God, he was then distracted with it.* And *Job*, whose Patience is celebrated for bearing all his outward Afflictions, loss of Estate, of Children, of Health, with an heroick Constancy, (*You have beard, says St. James of the Patience of Job*) yet when God comes to touch his Spirit with his Wrath, then we hear of his Impatience, he *curseth the Day of his*

his Birth, and wishes that God would destroy him, that he would let loose his Hand and cut him off. Job 6. 9.

And wherefore are these passionate Requests? why, he tells us, *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit: The Terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* And therefore though he could patiently bear all that the rage of the Devil could do against him, when he toucht his Wealth, his Children; yea, when he toucht his Body: yet his Patience could no longer hold out, when God came to touch his Soul and Conscience.

And yet the greatest Terrors of Conscience, whether in the Children of God to their Reformation, or in the Wicked to their Desperation, are but light and small touches of his Hand

in comparison with what shall be exprest hereafter on the Damned in *Hell*. For,

1. *First*, To the Godly these Afflictions are mixed with Love and Mercy. They come not as *Plagues*, but as *Medicaments* to do them good. But in *Hell* all is Wrath, pure Wrath and Judgment without Mercy. And certainly if those Sufferings which are inflicted in Love, and allay'd with Mercy, are yet so very dreadful to the People of God; how dreadfull will the Wrath of God be in *Hell*, where it shall be pure and unmixed, and nothing put into that Cup which the Damned are there to drink of, but the rankest Venome that can be squeezed out of all the *Curses* that ever God hath denounced? And then,

*Secondly*,

*Secondly,* To the Wicked all the Sufferings they here endure are nothing in comparison with what they must eternally suffer in *Hell*. They are now only sprinkled with a few drops of God's Wrath, but in *Hell* all his Waves shall go over them for ever. Here they do but sip a little of that Cup, and taste a little of the Froth of it, and should they drink deeper, Earth could not hold them, but they would grow drunk, and reel and stagger into *Hell*; but there they must for ever drink the very Dregs of that Cup of Trembling and Astonishment. And thou who now roarest like a wild Bull in a Net, when God's Hand is only upon thee, what wilt thou do when thou shalt eternally fall under his Mighty Hands? Thou now cryest out of the Intolerable-

P 3                      nefs

ness of thy present Pain : but, alas, hadst thou but felt one gripe of the Torments of the Damned in *Hell* ; had God and the Devil had but one blow a-piece at thee, thou wouldst choose to live for ever here on Earth in the most exquisite Torture that could be devised, the sharpest *Paroxysms* of the *Stone* or *Gout*, to be stretcht upon the Rack, to lye broke upon the Wheel, to have thy Flesh pluckt by fiery Pincers ; thou wouldst choose to suffer all these to Eternity ; yea and chose them as Recreations and Divertisements, rather than return to that place of Torment ; where not only the Eternity, but the Anguish of them, is infinite and unconceivable. And as one Day in the *Joy*s of *Heaven* is better than a thousand Years in all the impure  
and

and low Delights of Earth: So one Day in the *Torments of Hell*, is far worse than a thousand in the sharpest Miseries we can endure in this Life.

Here our Pains usually are but partial, God aims and shoots with his Arrow but at some one part of us: If he wounds our Spirits, yet this invisible Shaft (like *Lightning*) passeth thorow without making a Breach in our Bodies, or Estates; we have still our Health and Plenty left us. Or if he strike the Body, usually it is but in one, or at most but in some few Places, and we enjoy ease in the rest: But in *Hell*, God doth as it were wrap the whole Man up in Searcloth, and set it on fire round about them, so that they are tormented in every part, neither *Soul* nor *Body* escaping,

P 4

caping, nor any Power or Faculty of the one, nor any Part or Member of the other.

When we fall into the Hands of God, we are plunged into an Ocean of Wrath, and are covered all over with his Indignation; the Understanding, Will, Conscience, Affections, are all as full of Torments as they can hold: For what can be greater Anguish to the Mind than to know our Misery, and to know it to be remediless? And what can be greater Anguish to the Will and Affections, than most ardently and vehemently to desire freedom from those *Torments*, but yet to despair of ever obtaining it? And what can fill the Conscience with greater Anguish, than to reflect with infinite Horrour and Regret, that it was the Sinners own Folly and Madness that brought them

them to this miserable Condition? How will they be ready to rend and tear themselves in pieces, their Consciences curse their Wills, and their Wills curse their Affections, and their Affections the Objects that enticed them to the commission of those Sins, the Revenges of which they must now eternally suffer? And as for the *Bodies* of these Damned Souls, they shall after the *Resurrection* and dreadful *Day of Judgment*, become all Fire, like a live Coal, Fire shall be imbibed into the very Substance of them, and they not have so much as a drop of Water afforded them to cool the tip of their Tongues. Every Limb shall drop whole flakes of Fire and Brimstone, and they shall be so scourged with knotted and twisted Serpents, as to be made all over one great fiery Wound and

and Ulcer. And this is a third Consideration of the dreadfulneſs of everlaſting Vengeance ; *It is a falling into God's Hands.*

4.

*Fourthly*, Conſider, it is a *falling into the Hands of the Living God himſelf*, and not of any Creature. Indeed we read, *David choſe rather to fall into the Hands of the Lord, than into the Hands of Men.* It is true, when there is Repentance, and hopes of obtaining Mercy, this is far more eligible : for the Chaiſements of the Lord are full of Mercy ; but the tender Mercies of the wicked are cruel. But where all hopes of Mercy are excluded, as they are in Hell, certainly there it is infinitely more dreadful to fall into the Hands of a Sin-reven- ging-God, than into the Hands of all the Creatures in Heaven, Earth, or Hell it ſelf. One  
would

2 Sam. 24. 14.

would have thought it had been terrible enough, if the Apostle had said, It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of *Devils*; and so indeed it were, if we consider either their Power, or their Malice: they can easily find out such tormenting Ingredients, and apply them to such tender Parts, that it would transcend the Patience of any Man, quietly to bear but what one *Devil* can inflict. Do we not often see in the Illusions of black and sooty *Melancholy*, what strange Fears and Terrors they can imprint upon the Fancy, what Horror and Despair they can work in the Conscience, so as to make Men weary of their Lives, and many times persuade them to destroy themselves, only to know the worst of what they must suffer? And all this he can do out of his own  
King-

Kingdom; what then can he do when he hath got Sinners into his own Dominions? What exact Tortures can he inflict upon them there? such indeed as we cannot tell what they are, and may it please God we never may.

And yet the *Devil* is but a fellow-Creature; but wicked Men are to fall into the Hands, not of a Creature, but of the great Creatour, into the Hands of God himself, whose Power is infinitely beyond the Devil's, so that he is the Tormentor even of them.

Think then with thy self, O *Sinner*, that if God scourges, and torments the very Devils, who yet do so insufferably torment the Damned; how infinitely intolerable then is that Wrath which God himself shall inflict upon them? Consider with

with thy self, if thou canst not bear those Pains and Torments which the *Devils* inflict, and if the *Devils* cannot bear those Pains and Torments which God inflicts upon them; how wilt thou then, O Sinner, be able to bear the immediate Wrath and Vengeance of the great God himself?

Nay, let me go yet much lower; and suppose that God should make use of common and ordinary Creatures for the punishment of wicked Men, who is there that could bear this? If God should only keep a Man living for ever in the midst of a Furnace of gross and earthly Fire, how dreadful would this be! If but a Spark of Fire fall upon any part of the Body, what an acute Pain will it cause? much more if thy whole Man should  
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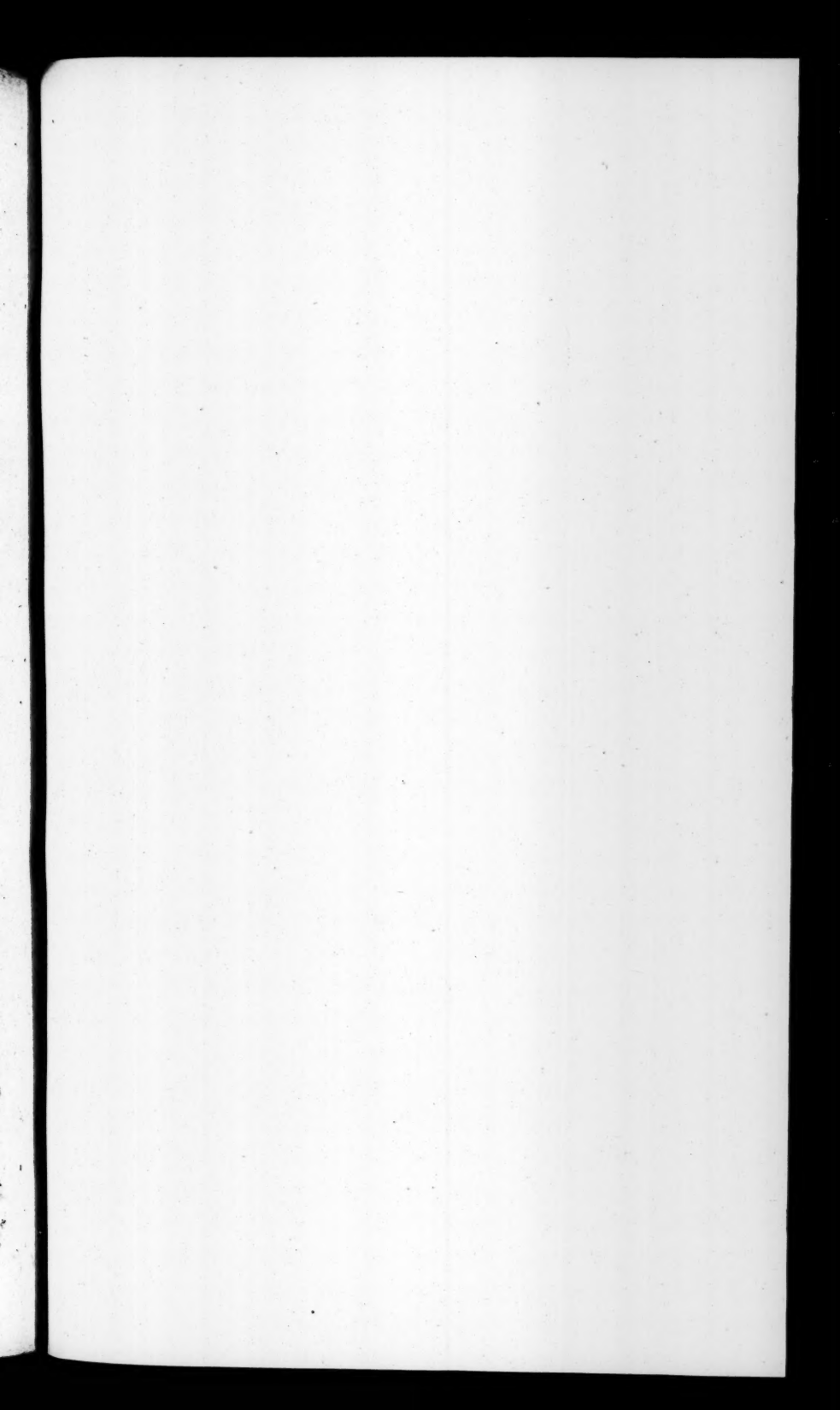
be all over on a light Flame, and thou for ever kept alive to feel the piercing Torment of it. And yet what is our dull unactive Fire in comparison of that pure intelligent Fire, which shall melt down the Damned like Wax, and lick up the very Spirits of their Souls ? Or suppose God who knows the several Stings that are in all his Creatures, should take out of them the most sharp Ingredients, and from them all make up a tormenting Composition ; if he should take Poison and Venome out of one, and Fire and Scorching out of another, and Smart and Stinging out of a third, and the Quintessence of Bitterness out of a fourth ; and by his infinite Skill, heighten all these to a preternatural Acrimony ; and should apply this Composition thus factually

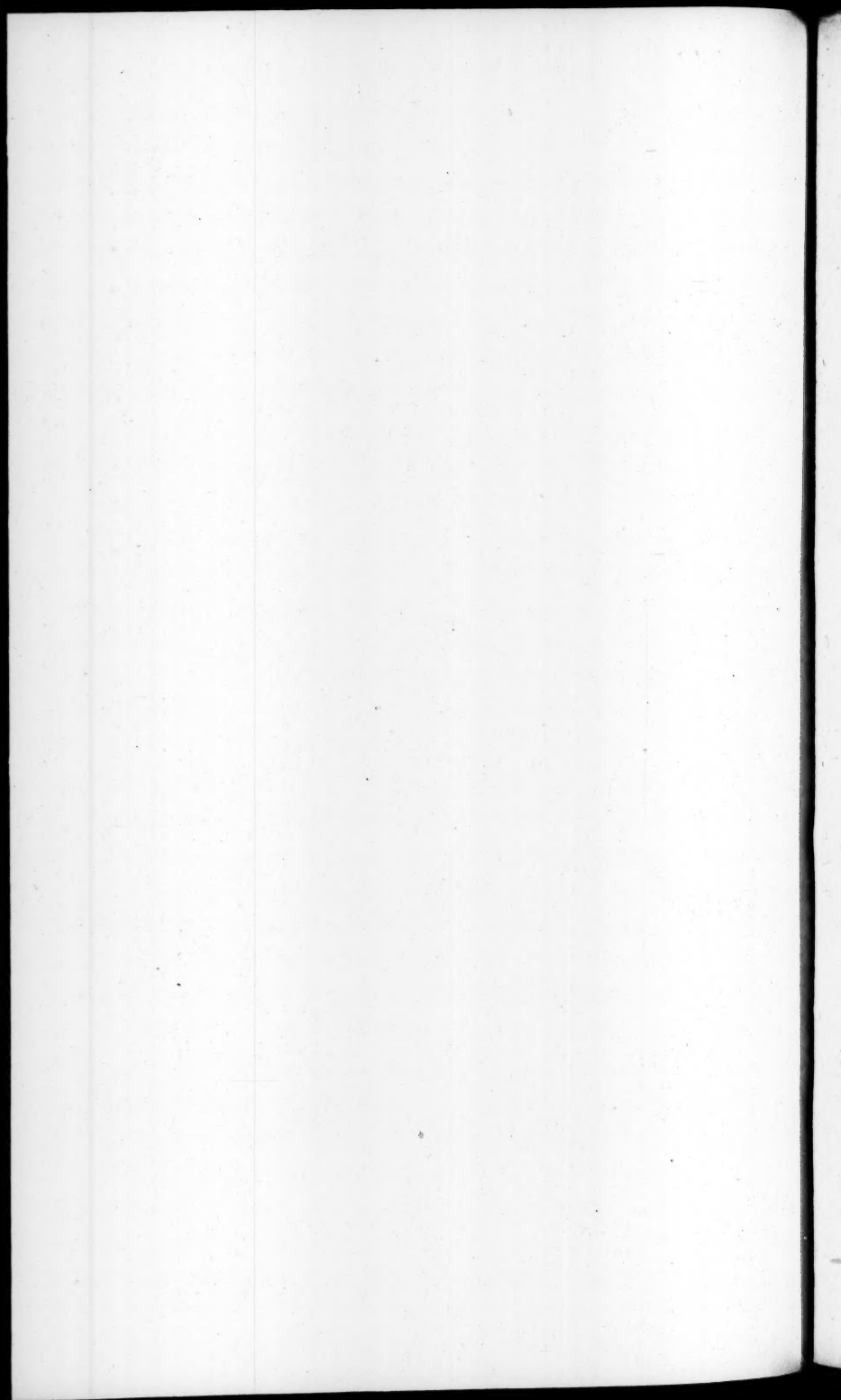
tally mixed and blended together, unto any of us, what an intolerable Anguish would it cause? And if Creatures can cause such Tortures, what a dreadfull thing then is it to fall into the Hands of God himself? For when God conveys his Wrath to us by Creatures, it must needs lose infinitely in the Conveyance. When God takes up one Creature to strike another, it is as if a *Gyant* should take up a *Straw* to strike a Man; for though he be never so strong, yet the Blow can be but weak, because of the weakness of the Instrument; and yet alas how terrible are such weak Blows to us? What will it then be when God shall immediately crush us by the unbated strokes of his own Almighty Arm, and express the Power of his Wrath, and the Glory of his  
his

his Justice and Severity in our eternal Destruction? And this is the *fourth Demonstration* of the dreadfulnes of Divine Vengeance.

5. *Fifthly*, Consider that the Apostle calls this Wrath, which the living God will inflict upon Sinners, by the Name of *Vengeance*. *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it.* Now *Vengeance* when it is whet and sharpened by Wrath, will enter deep, and cut the Soul to the Quick. God acts a Two-fold part in the punishment of Sinners.

1. *First*, of a *Judge*. In relation to which their Eternal Torments are sometimes called *Condemnation*; so we read of *the Condemnation of the Devil*; That is, that state of Woe and Wrath, to which the *Devil* is for ever sentenced. And Damnation, *How*  
can





*can you escape the Damnation of Hell?*  
 And sometimes it is termed  
 Judgment, *A certain fearfull look-* Heb. 10. 27.  
*ing for of Judgment and Fiery In-*  
*ignation.* And in *Jude 15. to ex-* Jude 15.  
*ecute Judgment upon all the Ungodly.*  
 Which denotes that their Punish-  
 ment shall be inflicted upon  
 them from God, as he is a Just  
 and Righteous Judge.

And *Secondly*, God is an *Aven-* 2.  
*ger* as well as a *Judge*. He is a  
 Party concern'd, as having been  
 wronged, and injured by their  
 Sins. And in relation to this,  
 the Punishments that God will  
 inflict upon them, are called  
 Wrath and Fury, smoaking An-  
 ger and Jealousie: *The Anger of* Deut. 32. 20.  
*the Lord and his Jealousie shall*  
*smoak against that Man.* Also,  
 Fiery Indignation, all which we Heb. 10. 27,  
 find amass'd and heaped together,  
*My Determination* (saith God) *is* Zeph. 3. 8.

to gather the Nations, to pour upon them mine Indignation, even all my fierce Anger; for all the Earth shall be devoured with the Fire of my Jealousie. Now, all these Expressions signifie the terribleness of that *Vengeance* which God will take. For when the Wrath of Man only stirs him up to revenge an Injury, he will be sure to do it to the utmost extremity of all his Power. And if the *Revenge* of a poor weak Man be so dreadful a thing; how insupportable will be the *Vengeance* of the great God, who assumes it to himself as part of his Royalty? *Vengeance is mine.* See that terrible place, *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adversaries, and he reserveth Wrath for his Enemies: Cod reserveth Wrath for Sinners, and*

Nah. 1. 2.

and keeps it in store, even that Wrath which themselves have treasured up against the Day of Wrath.

Now this *Revenging-Wrath* of God hath Two things in it that justly make it dreadful.

*First*, In that, *Revenge* always aims at Satisfaction, and seeks to repair Injuries received, by inflicting Punishment on the Offender. This gives ease to the Party grieved; and if this *Revenge* be commensurate to the greatness of the Offence, he rests satisfied in it. And therefore, God speaking of himself according to the Passions and Affections of Men, solaces himself in the thoughts of that *Vengeance* he would take upon Sinners, *Ab* Isa. i. 24.  
*I will ease me of mine Adversaries,  
I will avenge me of mine Enemies.*  
And, O how dreadful that Re-

venge must be, that shall ease the Heart of God, and give him satisfaction, for the heinous Provocations that Sinners have committed against him. For consider,

- I. *First*, How great and manifold our Offences have been, and every act of Sin, yea the least that ever we committed, is an infinite Debt, and carries in it an infinite Guilt, because committed against an infinite Majesty. For all Offences take their Measures, not only from the Matter of the Act, but from the Person against whom they are committed: As a reviling injurious Word against our *Equals*, will but bear an Action at Law; but against the *Prince*, it is High-Treason, and punishable with Death. So here, the least Offence against the infinite Majesty of God, becomes it self infinite: The Guilt of it is far beyond

beyond whatsoever we can possibly conceive : and yet what infinite Numbers of these infinite Sins have we committed ? The *Psalmist* tells us , *They are more* Psalm. 40. 12. *than the Hairs of our Head.* Yea, we may well take in all the Sands of the Sea-shore to cast them up by. Our Thoughts are incessantly in Motion ; they keep pace with the Moments, and are continually twinkling, and yet, *Every Imagination of the Thoughts of our Hearts is evil.* What Multitudes of them have been grossly wicked and impious ; Atheistical, Blasphemous, Unclean, Worldly, and Malicious ! and the best of them have been very defective, and far short of that Spirituality and Heavenliness that ought to give a Tincture unto them. And besides the Sins of our Thoughts , how deep

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have our *Tongues* set us on the score? We have talk'd our selves in debt to the Justice of God, and with our own Breath have been blowing up everlasting and unquenchable Fire. And add to these the numberless crowd and sum of our sinful Actions, wherein we have busily imployed our selves to provoke the Holy and Jealous God to Wrath, and we shall find our Sins to be doubly infinite in their own particular Guilt and Demerit. And now, *O Sinner*, when an angry and furious God shall come to exact from thee a full satisfaction for all these Injuries, a Satisfaction in which he may eternally rest and acquiesce, such as may repair and recompence his wronged Honour, think sadly with thy self, how infinitely dreadful this must needs be. Assure thy self God will

will not lose by thee, but will fetch his Glory out of thee, and take such a *Revenge* upon thee as shall as much please and content him, as his infinite Mercy doth in those whom he saves. And how great then must this *Vengeance* be?

*Secondly*, Consider how dreadful a *Revenge* God took on his own dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to satisfy his Justice upon him for our Sins. His Wrath fell infinitely heavy upon him, and the pressure of it was so intollerable, that it squeezed out drops of clotted Blood from him in the *Garden*, and that sad Cry on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And yet,

*First*, Our Lord Christ was supported under all his Sufferings by the ineffable Union of the

*Deity.* He had infinite Power for him, as well as against him; infinite Power to bear him up, as well as to crush him. In Christ's Sufferings, the Power of God seem'd as it were to encounter with, and run contrary to it self in the same Channel. And as he had the support of infinite Power in his Sufferings, so likewise had he in the greatest of his Agonies the Ministry of *Angels* to comfort him, and to refresh the Droopings and Faintings of his Humane Nature. And,

2. *Secondly,* The infinite Dignity of Christ's Person, being God as well as Man, might well compound for the Rigour of his Punishments, and stamp such a Value upon his Humiliation, that less degrees of Suffering from him, might be fully satisfactory.

For

For indeed it cannot be but an infinite Punishment, for an infinite Person to be punished. But thou that art but a vile contemptible Creature, made up of Mud and Slime, hast nothing in thy Nature wherewith to satisfy the Justice of God, but only the eternal Destruction and Perdition of it. Thou hast no Worth nor Dignity, the consideration whereof might perswade the Almighty to mitigate the least of his Wrath towards thee: And when it falls in all its weight and force upon thee, thou hast nothing to support thee. It is true, the Almighty Power of God shall continue thee in thy Being, but thou wilt for ever curse and blaspheme that Support, that shall be given thee only to perpetuate thy Torments, and ten thousand times wish that God would destroy thee

thee once for all, and that thou mightest for ever shrink away into nothing : but that will not be granted thee ; no, thou shalt not have so much as the comfort of dying, nor escape the Vengeance of God by Annihilation : but his Power will for ever so support thee , as for ever to torment thee, which is only such a Support as a Man on the *Rack* or on the *Wheel*, supported so as they cannot come off , the Engine of their Torture upholds them. And as for any help or relief the Ministry of Angels will afford thee, think what solace it will bring thee, when God shall set on whole Legions of *infernal Ghosts*, black and hideous Spirits , as the Executioners of his Wrath , who shall for ever triumph in thy Woes and add to them, hurl Fire-brands at thee, heap Fuel about

about thee, and fully ſatiate their Malice upon thee, as God ſatisfies his Juſtice. And this is one *Conſideration* of the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance, in that it aims at and exacts ſatisfaction for Sin, which will be infinitely intolerable, becauſe our Sins are infinite both in Number and Heinouſneſs. And becauſe Jeſus Chriſt, who was to ſatisfie not for his own, but for the Sins of others, though he were upheld by the *Divine Nature*, and poſſibly underwent not ſuch Acrimony of Wrath as the Damned do; yet his Sufferings were unſpeakable and unknown Sorrows: And how much ſorer then ſhall wicked Men bear for their own Sins, when Juſtice ſhall come to reckon with them, and to exact from them to the very utmoſt Farthing, of all that they owe?

*Secondly,*

2.

*Secondly*, Consider that *Reven-  
ging Wrath* stirs up all that is in  
God against a Sinner. *Wrath*  
when it is whet and set on by  
*Revenge*, redoubles a Man's Force,  
and makes him perform Things  
that he could not do in his cold  
Blood, it fires all a Man's Spirits,  
and calls them forth to express  
their utmost Efforts. So this  
*Reven-  
ging Wrath* of God draws  
forth all the Force and Activity  
of his Attributes, and sets them  
against a Sinner, and how dread-  
ful then must that Execution  
needs be? We see what great  
Works God can perform when  
he is not stirred up thereunto by  
his Wrath and Indignation. He  
speaks a whole World into Being,  
and speaks it with a cold and  
calm Breath. Certainly it was  
no small piece of work, to spread  
out the Heavens, and lay the  
Foun-

Foundations of the Earth , and to work all those Wonders of *Creation* and *Providence* which we daily behold ; but yet all these Things God did , (if I may so speak) without any Emotion. But when he comes to take *Vengeance* upon Sinners, he is then inflamed, all that is in God, is as it were on fire. *Jealousie*, says Solomon, is the Rage of a Man. Prov. 6. 34. Now when God's *jealousie* shall be stirred in him, think how impetuously it will break forth in the fearful effects of it. *The Lord shall stir up Jealousie like a Man of War*; he shall cry, yea, roar, he shall prevail against his Enemies. Isa. 42. 13. If the calm and sedate Works of God are so great and wonderful, how great then will his *Vengeance* be, when Anger, Fury, and Indignation shall excite and shew his Power to shew the very utmost

Psal 78. 38.

most of what it can do ? And therefore we find that though God had inflicted dreadful Plagues upon the *Israelites* in the Wilderness , and had shewn mighty effects of his Power and Vengeance, yet we find the *Church* blesseth him, *That he turned away his Anger, and did not stir up all his Wrath.* But in *Hell* God stirs up all his Wrath, every thing is set and bent against the Damned : And as to the *Saints* in Heaven , every Attribute of God concurs to make him merciful and gracious to them. So to the Wicked in *Hell*, all the Perfections of God conspire either to stir up and kindle his Wrath , or else to assist him in the execution of it upon them. The infinite *Wisdom* of God contrives their Punishments, and which way to lay them on, of that they shall be most sharp and

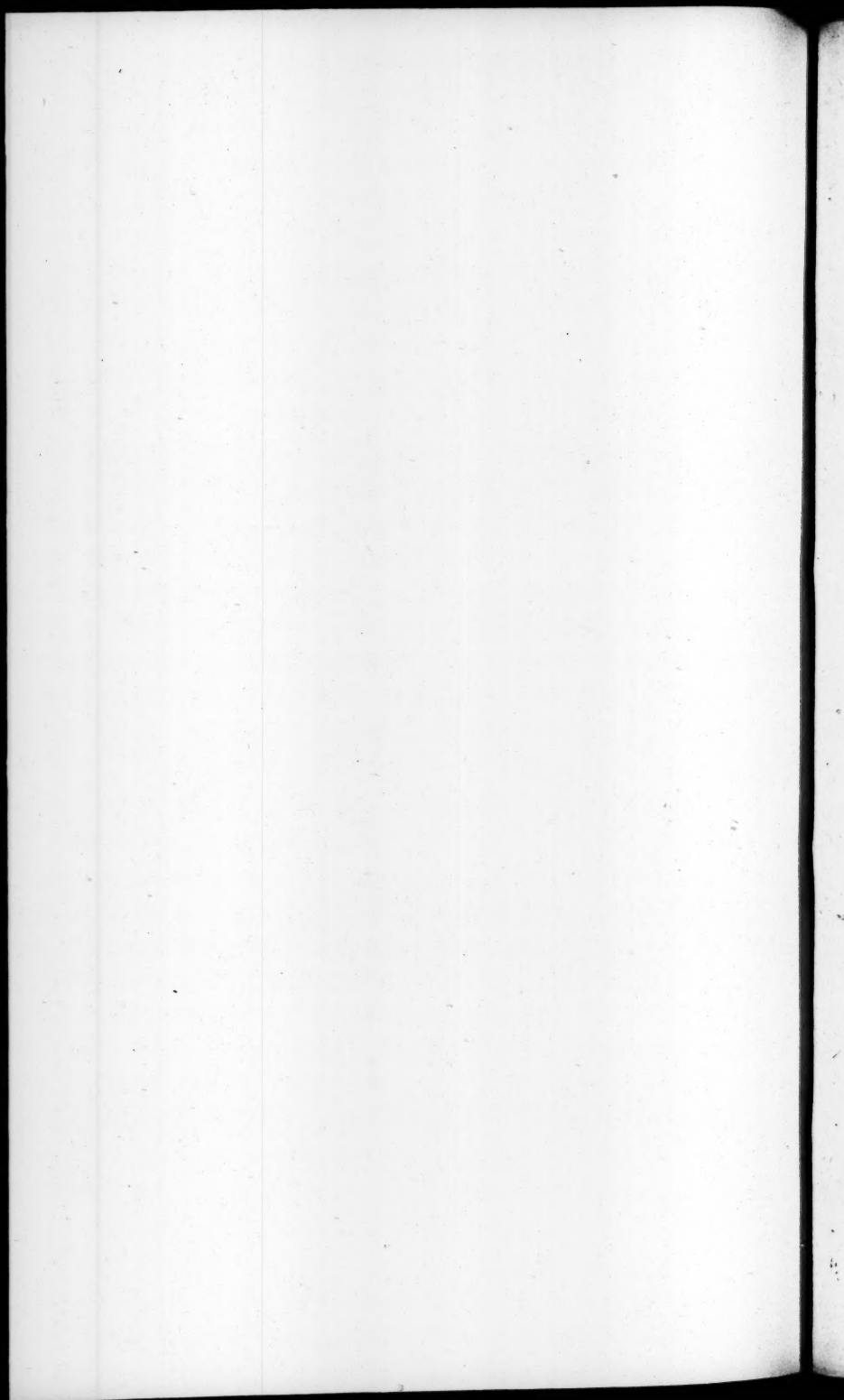
and poyant. The *Power* of God that rouses it self against them, and proffers all its Succours and Assistance unto *Vengeance*. The *Eternity* and *Unchangeableness* of God come in as a dreadful Addition, and makes that Wrath which of it self is insupportable, to be also everlasting? Yea that sweet and mild Attribute of God, his *Mercy*, the only Refuge and the only comfort of miserable Mankind, yet even this turns against them too, and because they despised it when it shone forth in Patience and Forbearance, will not now regard them when they stand in need of its Rescue and Deliverance: So that all that is in God, arms it self to take *Vengeance* on Sinners: And O think how sore and fearful that Vengeance will be, when God shall put forth all that is in himself for the  
the

the executing of his Wrath upon impenitent Sinners ! And thus I have done with the *Demonstrations* of the Dreadfulness of God's Wrath taken from the Words in the Text, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it. 'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.*

Let us now consider some other *Demonstrations* of the Greatness of this Wrath. And,

1. *First*, It appears to be exceeding dreadful in that it is set forth to us in *Scripture* by all those things which are most terrible to Humane Nature. God maketh use of many *Metaphorical* Expressions of things most grievous to our Senses, that from them we may take an hint to conceive how intolerable his Wrath is in it self. It is called a Prison, the *Spirits in Prison*, that is, the Souls  
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of those Men to whom the Spirit of Christ in *Noah* went, and preached in the Days of their Mortal Life, but for their Disobedience are shut up under the Wrath of God in Hell. And certainly *Hell* is a Prison large enough to hold all the World.

*The Wicked shall be turned into Hell,* Psal. 9. 17.  
*and all the Nations that forget God.*

A Prison it is where the Devil and wicked Spirits are shackled with Chains of massy and substantial Darkness. *They are,* says the Apostle, *reserved in Chains of Darkness unto the Judgment of the great Day.* And they are there kept in everlasting Chains under Darkness, not one Cranny in this great Prison to let in the least ray or glimpse of Light. It is called a *Place of Torment.* It is a Luke 16. 28.

Region of Woe and Misery, wherein Horrour, Despair, and

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Tor-

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Mat. 22. 13.

Mat. 13: 42,  
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Revel. 20. 15.

Revel. 19. 20.

Torture for ever dwell, and are in their most proper Seat and Habitation. It is called, a *drowning of Men in Destruction and Perdition*. One would think that to be drowned, might signifie Death enough of it self; but to be drowned in Perdition and Destruction, signifies moreover the fatalness and the depth of that Death into which they are plunged. It is called, *a being cast bound Hand and Foot into utter Darknes; A being thrown into a Furnace of Fire*, to be burnt alive. It is called, *a Lake of Fire*, into which wicked Men shall be plunged all over, where they shall lye wallowing and rowling among Millions of damned Spirits, in those infernal Flames. And this Lake is continually fed with a sulphurous stream of *Brimstone*: And this Fire and Brimstone is that which

which never shall be quenched. *He will burn up the Chaff* Mat. 3. 12. *with unquenchable Fire.* And lastly, to name no more, it is called everlasting *Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Mat. 25. 41. And now we are arrived at the highest pitch of what Sense can feel, or Imagination conceive. Or if it be possible that in your deepest Thoughts you can conceive any thing more dreadful than this, you may call it a *Sea of molten Brimstone*, set all on fire, and continually spewing out sooty dark Flames, wherein endless Multitudes of sinful Wretches must lye tumbling to all Eternity, burnt up with the fierceness of a tormenting and devouring Fire, scourged with Scorpions, stung with fiery Serpents, howling and roaring incessantly, and none to pity, much less to relieve and help

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them,

them, grinding and gnashing their Teeth through the extremity of their Anguish and Torture. If now you can fancy any thing more terrible and dreadful than this, *Hell* is that, yea and much more: For these things are *Metaphorical*; and though I cannot deny but some of these may be properly and literally true, yet the literal Sense of these *Metaphors* do but faintly and weakly shew us what the least part of those everlasting Torments are.

2.

*Secondly*, Another *Demonstration* of the dreadfulnes of this Vengeance is this, That it is a Wrath that shall come up unto, and equal all our Fears. You know what an inventive and ingenious thing Fear is, what horrid Shapes it can fancy to it self out of every thing: Put but an active Fancy into an Affright, and presently

sently the whole World will be filled with strange Monsters and hideous Apparitions. The very shaking of a Leaf will sometimes rout all the Forces and Resolutions of Men : And usually it is this wild Passion that doth enhance all other Dangers, and make them seem greater and more dreadful than indeed they are. But now here it is impossible for a wicked Man to fear more than he shall certainly suffer. Let his Imaginations be hung round with all the dismal Shapes that ever frightened Men out of their Wits : let his Fancy dip its Pencil in the deepest Melancholy that ever any Soul was besmeered with, and then strive to pourtray and express the most terrible things that it can judge to be the *Objects* of Fear, or the Instruments of *Torment*; yet the Wrath of the great

Psal. 90. 11.

God vastly exceeds all that Fear it self can possibly represent. See that strange Expression, *Who knows the Power of thine Anger? according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath.* That is, according to the fear Men have of thee, as dreadful and as terrible as they can possibly apprehend thy *Wrath* to be, so it is, and much more. Let the Heart of Man stretch it self to the utmost Bounds of Imagination, and call in to its Aid all the things that ever it hath heard or seen to be dreadful; let it (as that Painter, who to make a beautiful Piece, borrowed several of the best Features from several beautiful Persons) borrow all the dreadful, all the direful Representations that ever it met with, to make up one most terrible *Idea*; yet the Wrath of God shall still exceed it; He can execute more  
Wrath

Wrath upon us than we can fear. Some wicked Men in this Life have had a Spark of this Wrath of God fall upon their Consciences, when they lye roaring out under Despair and fearful Expectations of the fiery Indignation of God to consume and devour them. But alas this is nothing to what they shall hereafter feel. God now doth but open to them a small chink and crevice into *Hell*, he now doth but suffer a few small drops of his Wrath to fall upon them. And if this be so sore and smart that their Fears could never think of any thing more dreadful than what they now suffer: O what will it be then when he shall overwhelm them with a whole Deluge of his Wrath, and cause all his Waves to go over them? *Fear him*, says our Saviour, *who is able to destroy*

Mat. 10. 28.

*both Soul and Body in Hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him. And yet when we have feared according to the utmost extent of our narrow Hearts, yet still his infinite Power and Wrath is infinitely more fearful than we can fear it.*

3.

*Thirdly, Consider the principal and immediate Subject of this Wrath of God, and that is the Soul, and this adds much to the dreadfulnes of it. The acutest Torments that the Body is capable of, are but dull and flat things in comparison of what the Soul can feel. Now when God shall immediately with his own Hand lash the Soul, that refined and spiritual Part of Man, the Principle of all Life and Sensation, and shall draw Blood from it every Stripe, how intolerable may we conceive those Pains and Tortures to be ? To shoot poi-  
son'd*

son'd Darts into a Man's Marrow,  
to rip up his Bowels with a  
Sword red hot; all this is as no-  
thing to it. Think what it is to  
have a drop of scalding Oyl, or  
melted Lead, fall upon the Apple  
of your Eyes, that should make  
them boyl and burn till they fall  
out of your Heads; such Tor-  
ment, nay infinitely more than  
such, is it to have the burning  
Wrath of God to fall upon the  
Soul. We find that Spirits which  
are infinitely inferiour unto God,  
can make strange Impressions up-  
on the Souls of Men: and shall  
not the great God much more,  
who is the Father of Spirits?  
Yes, he can torture them by his  
essential Wrath. And that God,  
who, as the Prophet *Nabum* speaks, Nabum i. 6.  
*can melt Mountains, and make Hills*  
*and Rocks flow down at his Presence,*  
can melt the Souls of the Dam-  
ned,

Psal. 22. 14.

ned, like lumps of Wax ; for in his Displeasure he doth sometimes do it to the best of Men even in this Life , *My Heart is melted like Wax in the midst of my Bowels : says David.*

*Fourthly,* The Dreadfulness of this Wrath of God may be demonstrated by this, That the Punishment of the Damned is reserved by God as his last Work. It is a Work which he will set himself about when all the rest of his Works are done, when he hath folded up the World, and laid it aside as a Thing of no further use, then will God set himself to this great Work, and pour out all the Treasures of his Wrath upon damned Wretches, as if God would so wholly mind this Business that he would lay all other Affairs aside, that he might be intent only upon this,   
having

having no other thing to interrupt him. Think then how full of Dread and Terror this must needs be, when God will as it were employ all his *Eternity* about this, and have no other thing to take him off from doing it with all his Might. God hath reserved two Works, and but two for the other World; One is the *Salvation of the Elect*, and the other is the *Damnation of Reprobates*.

Now it is remarkable that God's last Works do always exceed his former: And therefore we find in the *Creation* of the World, God still proceeded on from more imperfect kind of Creatures to those that were more perfect, until he had fully built and finished, yea carved, and as it were painted this great House of the Universe; and then he brings Man into it as his last Work,

Work, as the Crown and Perfection of the rest: So God likewise acted in the manner of *revealing his Will* unto Mankind, first he spake to them by *Dreams* and *Visions*, but in the last Days (as the *Apostle* expresseth it) *he hath spoken unto us by his Son*. So also in the Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, and Exhibition of the *Messiah*, first he was made known only by *Promise* to the Fathers, then in *Types* and obscure Resemblances to the *Jews*, but in the latter Days, himself came and took upon him the form of a Servant, and wrought out a compleat *Redemption* for us. So usually the last Works of God are more compleat, perfect and excellent than the former. Now God's Punishing-Work is his last Work, and therefore it shall exceed in Greatness all that ever  
went

went before it. In his first Work; the Creation of the World, he demonstrated his infinite Power, Wisdom, and Godhead; but in the Destruction of Sinners, which is his last Work, he will manifest more of Power and Wisdom, than he did in his creating them; and how fearful a Destruction then must this needs be? God hath variety of Works that he is carrying on in this World, and if his Glory doth not perfectly appear in one, he may manifest it in another. But when he shall confine himself only to two, as he will in the World to come, the saving of the Godly, and the damning of the Wicked, and this without any variety or change, certainly when these shall be performed to the very utmost of what God can do: for as he will save the Saints to the very utmost;

utmost ; so likewise will he damn and destroy Sinners to the very utmost.

5.

*Fifthly*, Another Demonstration of the dreadfulnes of this Wrath shall be drawn from this Consideration, That God will for ever inflict it for the glorifying of his Power on the Damned.

Rom. 9. 22.

*What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known :*

2 Thef. 1. 9.

*And they shall be punish'd with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Now certainly, if God will inflict eternal Punishments upon them to shew forth his Power, their Punishments must needs be infinitely great. For,*

1.

*First*, All those Works wherein God shews forth his Power, are great and stupendous. Consider what Power it was for God

to

to lay the Beams of the World,  
and to erect so stately a Fabrick  
as Heaven and Earth. The A-  
postle therefore tells us, That  
*by the Creation of the World, is un-  
derstood the eternal Power of God.* Rom. i. 20.  
When God shewed his Power in  
creating, O what a great and  
stupendous Work did he pro-  
duce! And therefore certainly  
when God shall likewise shew  
his Power in destroying, the  
Punishments he will inflict will  
be wonderful and stupendous.

*Secondly*, Consider God can  
easily destroy a Creature without  
shewing any great Power, or  
putting forth his Almighty Arm  
and Strength to do it. If he  
only withdraw his Power by  
which he upholds all things in  
their Beings, we should quickly  
fall all abroad into nothing: So  
easie is it for God to destroy the  
well-

well-being of all his Creatures. But now if God will express the greatness and infiniteness of his Power in destroying Sinners, whom yet he can destroy without putting forth his Power, yea only by withdrawing and withholding it; O how fearful must this Destruction needs be! 'Alas we are crusht before the Moth, and must needs perish, if God doth but suspend the Influence of his Power from us. How dreadfully then will he destroy, when he shall lay forth his infinite Power to do it, who can easily do it without Power?

And thus I have laid down some *Demonstrations* of the dreadfulnes of the Wrath and Vengeance of God, five of them drawn from the Words of the *Text*, and five drawn from other *Considerations*. I shall now shut

up

up with two or three Words of Application.

*First,* Then be perswaded to believe that there is such a dreadful Wrath to come. I know well, you all profess that you do believe, that as there are unconceivable Rewards of Glory reserved in *Heaven* for the Saints; so, that there are inexhaustible Treasures of Wrath reserved and laid up in *Hell* for all ungodly and impenitent Sinners. But **©** how few are there that do really and cordially believe these things: Mens own Lives may be evident Convictions to themselves of their Atheism and Infidelity: For the true reason of all that dissoluteness which we see abroad in the World proceeds much from hence, because Men are not perswaded that these dreadful Terrors of the Lord

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i.  
Use.

which have now been set before us, are any thing but an honest Artifice. They look upon them as things only invented to scare the World into good order, and to awe Men into some compass of Civility and Honesty; They think all those tremendous Threatnings that God hath denounced in his Law to be things intended rather to fright Men, than to do execution upon them. And whereas one of the most effectual Motives to Piety and an holy Life, is to be perswaded of the Terrors of the Lord, these are not yet perswaded that there are any such Terrors: But assure your selves these are not the extravagant Dreams of *Melancholy Fancies*, nor the Politick Impostures of Men that design to amuse the World with frightful Stories; but they are sad and serious

rious Truths, such as however you may now slight and contemn, yet shall you be wofully convinced of by your own experience, when after a few years, or possibly a few days, you shall be sunk down into that Place of Torment, that Gulph and Abyfs of Misery, where the great God shall for ever exprefs the Art, and the Power of his Vengeance in your everlasting Destruction.

*Secondly*, This speaks abundance of comfort to all those whose Sins are pardon'd, and they delivered from the Wrath to come. Look what Spring-tydes of Joy would rise in the Heart of a poor condemned *Malefactor*, who every moment expects the stroke of Justice to cut him off, to have a Pardon interpose and rescue him from Death. Such, yea far greater should be

2.  
*Use.*

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thy

thy Joy who art freed meerly by a gracious Pardon, from a Condemnation infinitely greater and worse than Death it self. When we look into *Hell*, and consider the Wrath that the Damned there lye under, O to behold them there restlesly rolling to and fro in Chains and Flames, to hear them exclaim against their own Folly and Madnes, and to curse Themselves and their Associates as the Causes of their heavy and doleful Torments; how should we rejoyce that though we have been guilty of many great and heinous Sins, and have Ten thousand times deserved *Hell* and everlasting Burnings, yet our good and gracious God hath freely pardon'd us our Debts, and freed us from the same merited Punishments.

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly,* This also should excite us to magnifie the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us, who though he knew what the dreadful Wrath of God was, how fore and heavy it would lye upon his Soul, yet such was his infinite Compassion towards us, that he willingly submitted himself to be in our stead, took upon him our Nature, that he might take upon him our Guilt; and first made himself wretched, that he might be made accursed. He drank off the whole bitter Cup of his Father's Wrath at one bitter Draught, received the whole sting of Death into his Body at once; falls and dies under the Revenges of Divine Justice, only that we might be delivered from the Wrath that we had deserved, but could not bear. O Christian, let thy Heart be enlarged

3.  
*Use.*

with great Love and Thankfulness to thy blessed Redeemer ; and as he thought nothing too much to suffer for thee , return him this Expression of thy Thankfulness, to think nothing too much, nor too hard to do , or to suffer for him.

4. *Fourthly* , You that go on in  
*Use.* Sin , consider what a God you have to deal withal ; You have not to do with Creatures , but with God himself. And do you not fear that increated Fire that will wrap you up in Flames of his essential Wrath, and burn you for ever ? Consider that dreadful Expostulation that God makes.

Ezek. 22. 14. *Can thy Heart indure , or can thy Hands be strong in the Day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord ?*

The very weaknels of God is stronger than Man : God can breath, he can look a Man to Death ;

Death ; By the Blast of God they Job 4. 9.  
perish, and by the Breath of his No-  
strils are they consumed : They perish  
at the Rebuke of thy Countenance. ○ Psal. 80. 16.

then tremble to think what a load  
of Wrath his heavy Hand can  
lay upon thee, *That Hand which* Isa. 10. 12.  
*spans the Heavens, and in the Hol-  
low of which he holds the Sea.*

What Punishment will this great  
Hand of God in which his great  
Strength lies , inflict when it  
shall fall upon thee in the full  
Power of its Might ? And tell  
me now, *O Sinner*, wouldst thou  
willingly fall into the Hands of  
this God , who is thus able to  
crush thee to pieces, yea to no-  
thing ? O how shall any of us  
then dare, who are but poor weak  
Potsherds of the Earth, dash  
our selves against this Rock of  
Ages ? Indeed we can neither  
resist his Power, nor escape his  
Hand :

Hand : and therefore since we must necessarily sooner or later fall into the Hands of God, let us by true Repentance and an humble Acknowledgment of our Sins and Vileness, throw our selves into his merciful Hands ; and then to our unspeakable Comfort we shall find that he will extend his Arm of Mercy to support us, and not his Hand of Justice to crush and break us.

## FINIS.

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